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GEORGE WOODCOCK: ROMANTIC IDEALIST

University — Université

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

Degree for which thesis was presented — Grade pour lequel cette thèse fut présentée

Ph. D.

Year this degree conferred — Année d'obtention de ce grade 1983	Name of Supervisor — Nom du directeur de thèse DR. DAVID JACKEL

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GEORGE WOODCOCK: ROMANTIC IDEALIST

by

JACK ROBINSON

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

EDMONTON, ALBERTA
FALL, 1983

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

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ABSTRACT

This intellectual biography defines the collocation of beliefs and concerns at the heart of George Woodcock's eclectic and prolific works. A confluence of anarchist principles and Romantic assumptions is found to run throughout his *oeuvre*, informing not only his polemical intentions but also his approaches to the writing of biographies, social histories, and literary criticism. The formation of these central ideas during the thirties and forties in England, under the influences of Aldous Huxley, Herbert Read, Marie Louise Berneri, and George Orwell, is treated in detail. Attention is given to the emotional context of Woodcock's beliefs, from the apocalyptic forebodings of the Great Depression and the Second World War which caused the young idealist to embrace the anti-political philosophy of anarchism, to a growing scepticism and irony which led him, in later years, to abandon anarchism's more naive tenets while he remained loyal to its exemplary myth of individual nobility and social melioration. The interrelation between life and text is examined in actions embodying Woodcock's passionate commitment to the ideals espoused in his books.

His career as one of Canada's most important men of letters, including his libertarian regionalist view of the country's culture and history, his forgotten radio plays, and the theory and practice of his self-designated role as a public critic, is chronicled in full. The general purpose of this study is threefold: to clarify the thought and sensibility of this enigmatic author; to place the unity of ideas pervading his works against the background of modern currents of thought in politics and literature; and to achieve a balanced and comprehensive evaluation of George Woodcock's writings, which have been too long neglected or misrepresented.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to thank George Woodcock for his generous and prompt correspondence, which provided help in finding research materials, and thorough and informative answers to my questions about his works and his life. Thanks also to Dr. David Jackel for his diligent and always helpful comments on style and content.

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INTRODUCTION

George Woodcock's eclectic and prolific writings have made him one of Canada's foremost men of letters. He is known as a scholar and advocate of anarchism, a critic of Canadian literature and society, a travel-writer and social historian, a biographer, a poet, and a radio dramatist. After launching the critical quarterly Canadian Literature in 1959, he built it into one of the country's best literary magazines before handing on the editorship to W.H. New in 1977. Canadians have bestowed on Woodcock the Governor General's Award for Non-Fiction, the University of British Columbia President's Medal for Popular Biography, and the Molson Prize for literature. As an anarchist, he has twice quietly refused the Order of Canada because it was an honour conferred by a nation-state rather than by his peers.

When he came to Canada in 1949 Woodcock brought with him the polemical spirit of the thirties and forties in England. Absorption in the literary life of London during those decades had fostered beliefs and interests that were to distinguish his entire career. He was very impressed by the early novels of Aldous Huxley, and befriended Herbert Read and George Orwell; their influences upon him were chronicled later in three intellectual biographies. Most importantly, Woodcock became an anarchist, adopting a non-system of beliefs that informed his later studies of anarchist thinkers and historical movements, and, in more subtle ways, suffused everything he has written since, from his travelogues and social histories of South America and Asia to his over thirty plays and hundreds of talks and documentaries for radio commissioned by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.

The order underlying the apparent profusion of Woodcock's thought is found in his anarchist vision of a world where the integrity of the individual, the local community, the racial or religious group, and the region matter more than the coercive powers of state, church, property, and unlimited technology. It is a vision based upon the faith that men are capable of the self-knowledge, self-discipline, mutual respect, and sociability needed to transform licence into liberty, chaos into true anarchy. Doug Fetherling has called it an awareness of "the way man-made institutions pose a threat to human dignity and freedom."[1] While he found the Ariadne's thread, Fetherling did not, however, go on to explain how it leads us through the labyrinth.

Other writers have also failed to define the core of

Woodcock's intellectual life in all its myriad implications. "He's an authority on nearly everything!" exclaimed Al Purdy,[2] suggesting that such an untethered curiosity defies definition. Michael Bliss found it necessary to insist that "there really is only one George Woodcock."[3] Dennis Duffy made the best attempt to illustrate the unsystematic coherence of Woodcock's canon:

> His work is best perceived as lines radiating from a single dot on a map, linking a number of seemingly disparate locations into a network deriving its strength from its very flexibility, its tentacular virtue enabling it to grasp firmly the multifoliate detail that eludes rigid systems.[4]

Yet Duffy did not proceed to elucidate the terms of this metaphor in concrete detail. Peter Hughes began the task in his sixty-page monograph, the longest existing study of Woodcock until the present one.[5] Hughes' little book was, however, incomplete; published in 1974, it antedated some important developments in Woodcock's career, while its brevity and selectivity meant that certain writings were neglected. Hughes' peripatetic method of darting here and there in Woodcock's *oeuvre*, following his own thematic designs, resulted in an impressionistic and often revealing portrait, but one that failed to place the subject's ideas in their chronological and biographical contexts.

This is, therefore, the first comprehensive intellectual biography of George Woodcock. All of his writings to the present have been considered, and the radio plays and contributions to anarchist periodicals of the forties have been treated in detail. The general purpose of the study is to define the nexus of beliefs formed during the thirties and forties, and to trace their ramifications throughout Woodcock's later works. The diverse manifestations of the predominant Romantic strain in his sensibility will be clarified, as will the various implications of his polemical view of literature.

The Rousseauian and Godwinian ideal of the innate nobility of natural or primitive man, free from the fetters of developed society, is, of course, Romantic. Also Romantic is the decadent sadness of some of Woodcock's poems and radio plays, seen in the agonized surrender to the horrors of political realities, or in the withdrawal into a private realm of imagination. The hallmarks of Romantic criticism, the intentional and affective fallacies, pervade Woodcock's practical criticisms of emerging literature and its milieu, for in eschewing the narrow textual approach of the New Critics he committed these fallacies deliberately.

The stance of the public critic accorded with his emphasis upon statement and persuasion in literature, and involved an interest in the social issues of Utopian and political fiction. Yet he did not ignore the aesthetic aspects of literature or impose his political principles as criteria of excellence. In his other writings polemical goals have been paralleled by other means of stressing ideas, such as the creation of national myths and of all-encompassing mythical interpretations of social history, and in Woodcock's attitude that the ideas of his biographical subjects were to be considered on their own merits, not mitigated by critical analyses of their personalities.

The intellectual biography is especially apposite for the study of a polemicist because it gives primacy to ideas while allowing text and experience to be interrelated. All of Woodcock's writings have the intimacy of personal testaments, being made vivid and immediate by his candid reactions to persons, peoples, places, religions, art, and literature. His empathetic criticism is often about writers he has known personally, and his travelogues and social histories are enhanced by episodes in which he has gained entry to experiences normally closed to outsiders, whether a Salish spirit dance, a Doukhobor feast, or an audience with the Dalai Lama. Some of the events described in his works have had far-reaching consequences in Woodcock's life; after encountering Tibetan refugees in northern India in 1961, he and his wife established and operated for eighteen years an Aid Society to help the exiles. Woodcock has not only espoused anarchist ideals; he has also applied them.

It is equally important to understand the emotional context in which these ideals have been held. Woodcock's idealism has been tempered by scepticism and sustained by a sense of irony. Quite rightly, he has described himself as a "sceptical idealist," a "revolutionary conservative."[6] His pessimism has found expression in his rejection of the tragic machinations of statist politics, his impatience with superficial forms of radicalism, and his unrelenting scrutiny of his own convictions. In many of his works Woodcock has acknowledged the tortuous complexities of political commitment: the impossibility of retreat from the modern world to a natural paradise, the vagaries of charity in capitalist society, the dilemma of the ruler forced to sacrifice ideals to political exigency, the subversion of revolutions by the lust for power, and the seemingly inevitable disintegration of primitive peoples when placed in proximity with more advanced societies. His idealism is not that of the *ingénu*, but of the seasoned scholar and traveller, clear-eyed and hopeful, but also doubt-laden and world-weary.

Over the years self-criticism has enabled Woodcock to avoid dogmatism by challenging and modifying his beliefs. His activist cry of the forties for an anarcho-syndicalist revolution gave way in the fifties to nurturing the positive trends within existing society. He celebrated the degree of freedom and tolerance ensured by regionalism and pluralism, in the hope that they would be harbingers of further decentralism. His Clio has always been the Muse of the underdog. In his Canadian social histories Woodcock focused on the imperilled cultures of the Métis, Indians, and Doukhobors, and in works on other countries he exposed social inequalities and racial prejudices, including the iniquities of the British Empire. Denouncing the oppression of all Churches, he has studied the lives and works of anarchist mystics such as Mohandas Ghandi and Thomas Merton. Though he detests intellectual systems, his wide-ranging interests have always followed, by routes sometimes circuitous, a clearly libertarian direction. Let us now begin to follow these fascinating peregrinations.

Notes

1. Doug Fetherling, Intro. to A George Woodcock Reader, ed. by Doug Fetherling (Toronto: Deneau & Greenberg, 1980), p. vii.
2. Al Purdy, Intro., George Woodcock, Notes on Visitations (Toronto: Anansi, 1975), p. i.
3. Michael Bliss, "The One and Only Woodcock," rev. of The World of Canadian Writing: Critiques and Recollections, by George Woodcock, Saturday Night, Oct., 1980, p. 61.
4. Dennis Duffy, "George Woodcock: Voyager of Liberty," Canadian Literature, No. 83 (Winter, 1979), p. 157.
5. Peter Hughes, George Woodcock (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1974).
6. George Woodcock, Taking it to the Letter (Dunvegan, Ont.: 1981), p. 136.

7

CHAPTER I

EARLY YEARS IN ENGLAND

George Woodcock was born in Winnipeg in 1912. His father, Arthur Woodcock, a merchant's son from Shropshire, had come to Canada in 1907 to seek his fortune in farming, but returned to England five months after his son's birth, his health broken by the extremes of climate. Having failed in his land of bucolic dreams, Arthur faced what Woodcock has called "a dozen years of failure until death,"[1] and during those years often spoke of Canada with nostalgic longing. When Woodcock returned to Canada with his wife Ingeborg in 1949, and sought to realize a Tolstoyan or Thoreauvian ideal of combining intellectual and manual work in a rural setting, the endeavour was strongly influenced by his father's lost hopes of establishing a wilderness Utopia:

> Though he could never recover his health, and indeed was doomed to die very shortly afterwards, he still elaborated projects, into which I entered zestfully (not quite realizing the true situation), for settling on homestead land on the Peace River in British Columbia. We studied leaflets on growing melons, on beekeeping, on house construction, all of

> which appealed to the Robinson Crusoe streak in my nature; I never grew melons or kept bees, but a quarter of a century afterward I did build two wooden houses with my own hands in British Columbia.[2]

Being something of a musician and scholar *manqué*, Arthur also passed on to his son a desire to succeed in this second area of failed ambitions, a desire that was all the stronger, Woodcock admitted, because of the special intimacy he shared with his father: "I was devoted to my father, a gentle, sensitive, honourable man, and never really liked my powerful, domineering, equally honourable mother."[3] Woodcock's reading of the great nineteenth-century English naturalists and his facility for sensitive description were stimulated by long nature-walks with his father. He has attested that the travel narratives of Darwin, Bates, Belt, Waterton, A.R. Wallace, and W.H. Hudson made him an assiduous traveller, and introduced him to the "clear and vigorous" prose he later strove to emulate.[4] The array of reference books on his father's bookshelves inculcated a love of such volumes as county directories, so that "I had from about eleven a good idea of the immediate regions in which I lived, a habit I have followed ever since and which has undoubtedly fostered my strong regionalist predilections."[5] Arthur Woodcock was also "a great defender of Wilde, which took some courage in his time and place,"[6] and this radical taste no doubt influenced his son's portrait of the anarchic and decadent author.

The first five years of Woodcock's childhood were spent in the rural Shropshire town of Market Drayton, the years of the First World War in Altrincham in Cheshire, and from 1918 onward in the Thames-side resort town of Marlow. Between the ages of five and seventeen Woodcock lived in Marlow during the school term, and for the summer holidays stayed with his grandparents in the much more rural and Victorian world of Market Drayton. There his Anglican churchwarden grandfather kept a strictly Low Church household and served as a negative example for his grandson, who disliked the puritanical atmosphere and the missionary dinner-guests. Making the best of his grandfather's rule that profane books were to be put aside on the Lord's Day, Woodcock read missionaries' accounts and the reports of the Church Missionary Society - readings that inspired some of his later travels:

> I read, for example, John G. Paton's lurid accounts of his mission to Erromanga and Tanna in the New Hebrides, and about fifty years later I found myself on those very islands: the CMS reports aroused an interest in south India and particularly Kerala, and a generation after reading them I was there.[7]

When he became a political radical in about 1930, Woodcock rejected his past "including my appalling churchwarden grandfather."[8] At that point imperialism became the great moral enemy, and closely linked to it were the inhumanity and xenophobia of missionary zeal.

In Marlow the Woodcocks lived in a very modest terrace house with neither electricity nor gas nor piped water.[9] They regarded this residence as temporary and provisional, but, always lacking the will and the money to move, the family remained until both parents had died (in 1926 and 1940). These years of penury induced in his parents what Woodcock has called a "soured gentility,"[10] for they considered themselves lower-middle-class people marooned among the lower echelons of the working-class. They became almost anti-social, declining invitations to dinner if they could not provide the same level of hospitality in return. One fortunate result of these shabby circumstances was that Woodcock came into contact with the poor and the foreigners of the community - a contact which provincial respectability would otherwise have denied him, and which certainly had some influence upon his later egalitarian and cosmopolitan outlook.

Into a life troubled by class differences penetrated the occasional shocking missive about the Great War, the aftermath of the Russian Revolution, the rise of fascism in Italy, and other turbulent political events. Woodcock recalled being taken at the age of six to a lecture with lantern slides on recent developments in St Petersburg:

> I still retain very clearly in my mind's eye two of the slides, one of dingily clad Russian soldiers standing packed in railway trucks, and the other of fighting in

> a square, with people running and some lying dead on the pavements. I was introduced early to the realities of our time.[11]

Revolution was also in the air closer to home when Woodcock, having passed through the nearby Bisham elementary school, entered Sir William Borlase's grammar school in 1924, the year of its three hundredth anniversary. A Shelley cult flourished at the school because the adjacent house had been inhabited by Shelley and Mary Godwin, and the great cedar tree under which Shelley had written much of The Revolt of Islam stood over the school quadrangle. Woodcock imbibed this cult, and testified recently that "though I no longer think a great deal of Shelley as a poet, my social philosophy, like his, owes a great deal to William Godwin."[12]

In 1928, two years after his father's death, Woodcock graduated from Sir William Borlase's and, because of economic necessity, took a job as a railway clerk in London. He stuck with this job for eleven years from the age of sixteen to twenty-seven, commuting each day from Marlow to the Great Western Railway offices at Paddington. These were "nine-to-five years, a decade of sub-bureaucratic drudgery, lit by black fires and frustration in whose anti-glare I clung to the crumbling ledge of 30 shillings a week, as one did in the thirties if one's fingers held; Depression years personally as well as collectively."[13] Finally, when his mother died in the early years of the second World War, a small inheritance freed him to move to London and to write full-time.

During these grim years, Woodcock became an avid reader of Aldous Huxley's novels, finding that Huxley expressed with consummate skill "the disillusionment with war and with the society that produced it which characterized the twenties and ripened through the Depression."[14] When Brave New World appeared in 1932 he hailed it as a brilliant feat of intellectual agility, futurist fantasy, and cautionary fun at the expense of the scientific world: "I gave as little thought as most other readers then to the seriousness of its criticism of the scientific method, or, for that matter, to the prospect - which became alarmingly evident only ten years later in the 1940's - that what one read might actually be a prophecy."[15] It was Huxley's rationalism that impressed Woodcock most, and by 1936 he had come to share with Huxley what he considered the very rational doctrine of libertarian pacifism. He was also "a militant agnostic who halted before atheism only because it seemed another dogmatic position."[16] Woodcock felt betrayed, therefore, when Eyeless in Gaza (1936) advocated a mystical awareness as a precondition of the establishment of a pacifist and decentralist society.[17]

Later in his career Woodcock came to accept, however, Huxley's union of the intellectual and the mystical, acknowledging the efficacy of prayer and the existence of telepathic communication as "unexplained aspects of the phenomenal world,"[18] and professing a belief that "we participate in designs created by a universal intelligence of which we are emanations."[19] He also came to believe in Huxley's dictum that mystical vision is ancillary to the struggle for a libertarian society, expressing this principle in a scholarly fascination with mystics who espoused anarchist social views, including Gandhi, Thomas Merton, and the Taoist philosophers (who, as Woodcock noted, also held an allure for Wilde and Merton).

While his reading of Eyeless in Gaza stimulated an interest in mysticism Woodcock was "already writing with the directionless outpouring of a young autodidact whose literary ambitions had been nurtured in the unencouraging isolation of a provincial town in that philistine age between the wars."[20] After publishing some stories in a Manchester University student paper called The Serpent, he found a regular though not too discriminating publisher in Charles Lahr of the Blue Moon Bookshop on Red Lion Street, who published the chapbooks Six Poems, Solstice, and Ballad of an Orphan Hand in 1938 and 1939. Most of these incunabula were derivative and uneven. Woodcock admitted that Solstice was "a very immature poem which I did not choose to include in any of my other collections,"[21] and the same could be said for Ballad of an Orphan Hand, which was reprinted in The White Island (1940) but not afterward. Ballad was important only for the glimpse it gave of

Woodcock's later concern with the dichotomy between decadence and political commitment, for it told the story of a mythical figure who travelled the land helping the needy, but, enthralled by the touch of a woman, sank into a life of concupiscence bereft of freedom and love.

Mingled with these failures were, however, three poems published before 1938 that Woodcock found worth preserving forty years later. Reflecting the Imagist goal of achieving a heightened sense of reality by isolating single instants of perception, they presented simple experiences as symbolic of the social *malaise* of the times. "Summer Fire" described the burning of a cherry orchard with melancholic connotations of political and social conflagration. "Winter Wheat" and "Sawmill," published in the ephemeral *Socialist Clarion*, caught, Woodcock recalled, "the social echoes which by that time it was difficult to avoid even on the long walks over the Buckinghamshire chalkhills that in those days gave me the hints for most of my poems."[22] The stalks of winter wheat stood in a "barbed circle" of "uncompromising selfness" but in the spring they would be replaced by "tall slender brothers/ leaning together," suggesting the tension between individualism and brotherhood that would become central to Woodcock's anarchist thought. The deserted sawmill and the tramp's fire "winking behind abandoned cordwood" presented in a single powerful image the despondency and apoplexy of the Depression era's waste and desolation. The three poems conveyed the brooding and portentous social criticisms that were to distinguish Woodcock's entire oeuvre.

When a few of his poems were published in Geoffrey Grigson's New Verse and Julian Symons' Twentieth Century Verse in 1938 and 1939, Woodcock's literary career expanded in scope. Recognition by the two leading avante garde poetry journals of the late thirties enabled him to contribute to Adelphi, Life and Letters, and Partisan Review. His poetry was also given a new élan by the Twentieth Century Verse cénacle's interest in myth, and by Grigson's ideal of an "unpoetic" verse. Grigson advised poets to make images reveal their meanings through complex emotional connotations, without "poetic" explanations or descriptions.[23] This succinct undiscursive verse complemented the penchant of the Twentieth Century Verse group for a suggestive use of myth and symbol, as Woodcock explained:

> ... we regarded myths as models in which we could use existing components cavalierly, in new combinations, to create pictures of human situations, of psychological states. The familiarity of symbols and legends turn them into a kind of shorthand by which it became possible to convey a great deal more, in a concise, oblique manner, than could have been done in a more discursive form.[24]

Woodcock used myth to evoke the plight of the individual in an era of totalitarianism, as seen in the symbolic setting and action of "The Island," Woodcock's first poem published in Twentieth Century Verse.[25] The poem presented the struggle of one man, alone in an indifferent world, to overcome the inhuman cruelty of his fellows. Some men hunted down a "fugitive," found him naked and starving on a barren island, and tortured him on a rack, but he would not tell of the "hidden ore." Fire jetted from the ruptures of his broken joints and the man strode off across the sea leaving only straw limbs and a horse's skull; the frustrated hunters departed. The Promethean figure here was tortured not by angry gods but by his own kind, suggesting a terrible clash within man between free aspiring spirit and earthbound authority, his fantastic survival implying the transcendence of human violence by a superhuman effort of will; the body might be torn apart, but what Orwell called "the crystal spirit" could not be shattered.

"Memorandum from Arcadia" used another bleak setting to make a symbolic social criticism, modern anomie being embodied in the persona of an Arcadian guide and trapper driven to suicide by a brutely physical life in a severe haunting landscape.[26] The same elemental realities were evoked in "Breughel," wherein the persona stood before Breughel's Hunters in the Snow, observing the dun-clad hunters and dreaming gloomily of their "long and fruitless days on cold landscapes," the "unnamed quarry eluding every chase."[27] He saw the future of his own society mirrored in the meaningless and futile hunt.

Other poems were excoriating satires on destructive religious and political myths. The "Gods" of the past, described as gigantic defunct machines with limbs set "hard as their own outdated changeless laws," watched impassively while sacrifices were made and wars fought in their names; Woodcock deplored the capacity of men to construct Gods, to ascribe to them changeless laws, and to commit all manner of injustice in their names.[28] "The Hero" presented a bitterly ironic parable of human progress.[29] The hero came from the east, the land of the Gods, killing the kings and "titled drones," feeding the poor, and abrogating old faiths and superstitions, but when he died he was made an avatar, his laws enforced with tyrannical religious fervour, and icons built in his image only to be destroyed by another revolutionary.

In "The Announcer's Speech" Woodcock turned his critical eye upon the myth of Utopia.[30] The Announcer proclaimed that the Golden Age had arrived; Death, Devil, and God had left town for good, and there would be no more work or weak hearts. Yet this perfection had ominous implications, for the imperious announcer arrogated the right to abolish work, religion, and even concepts of good and evil. In recognizing the dangers of coercion endemic to the myth of Utopian perfection, Woodcock foreshadowed his later warnings that a healthy society would not tend toward such ahistorical stasis, but would reflect the natural law of Heraclitean flux.

Even more important than the early emergence in these poems of specific ideas was the general tendency to see social problems and their possible solutions in terms of myths. This tendency expressed Woodcock's anarchist principle that society is shaped by ideas and the will and moral stamina of those who hold them, rather than by material and economic circumstances. This was, then, the first surfacing of that mythic and controversial approach that informed Woodcock's historical writings - an approach involving all-encompassing theories of myth-making proportions, venturesome speculations, and an emphasis on biography. Here too was the root of Woodcock's ultimate view that anarchism was not a practical blueprint for political change but a salutary myth of individual nobility and social freedom.

Though New Verse and Twentieth Century Verse ceased publication at the commencement of the war, Woodcock's brief association with them brought to the fore important attitudes toward class and politics. New Verse was a continuation in periodical form of the leftist anthologies New Signatures and New Country, though Auden, Spender, and MacNeice had been replaced in the periodical by a pleiade of younger poets. Grigson, Charles Madge, Kathleen Raine, Bernard Spencer, and Francis Scarfe had had all been to some classic public school and then to Oxford or Cambridge. In contrast, the poets who clustered around Twentieth Century Verse (Symons, Roy Fuller, Ruthven Todd, D.S. Savage, Keidrych Rhys, and Woodcock) were "all autodidacts from the moment we left grammar school."[31] The unbridgeable gap between the middle and working classes divided the two magazines, and in recalling their rivalry Woodcock has commented that "the smell of caste floats most pungently out of the past."[32]

He felt immediately at home with the Twentieth Century Verse constellation, some of whom became lifelong friends. Grigson ran New Verse in a very patrician manner, keeping a distance between the magazine's inner circle and other contributors, and maintaining a strict editorial emphasis on "unpoetic" verse and Communist allegiances. On the other hand, Woodcock found Symons more welcoming and genial, and his editorial policy, as announced in the first number of the journal, was certainly more catholic: "Our first object is to print the work of young poets who, for one reason or another, the cut of their jacket or the colour of their tie, do not get much of a hearing elsewhere."[33] Symons' accommodation of a greater variety of political views was attributable, Woodcock thought, to "the less doctrinaire kind of leftism that appeared in the later thirties with the disillusionments caused by the Moscow trials and Russia's equivocal role in Spain."[34]

For several years Woodcock's political beliefs had been moving from the Communism of the New Signatures and New Verse groups toward a more libertarian outlook. When in the late thirties he began to haunt Charles Lahr's Blue

Moon Bookshop (where he met many writers including his close friend, the Indian novelist, Mulk Raj Anand), his conversations there uncovered many "facts of Stalinist repression in Russia and betrayal in Spain that shocked my innocent 1937 leftism, while they convinced me."[35] For Woodcock the Spanish Civil War led decisively from "the political thirties to the anti-political forties."[36] He was appalled that as late as 1937 Spender had supported the Popular Front, "the most dead of all the dodos of that extinct era," and Day Lewis's line "Why do we all, seeing a Communist, feel small?" struck him as "poetic inanity."[37]

Orwell too decried the lack of political awareness among Communist sympathizers of the late thirties. He was astonished that English leftists, ignoring the blatant evidence of Stalinist tyranny, continued to join the Communist Party until 1939. Orwell ascribed this anopsia to the coddling effects of an English public school education - "five years in a lukewarm bath of snobbery."[38] Having fought in Spain for almost a year, escaping death by a hair's breadth when shot in the neck, and having documented the Communist infiltration of Republican forces in Homage to Catalonia (1938), he despised the callow war-mongering of English liberals. When Auden, after spending two months of 1938 in Spain as a stretcher-bearer, wrote in his poem "Spain" of "the conscious acceptance of guilt in the act of murder," Orwell deprecated the line. "Mr. Auden's brand of amoralism," he argued, "is only possible if you are the kind of person who is always somewhere else when the trigger is pulled."[39]

From the beginning of the "anti-political forties" literature and libertarianism were closely related in Woodcock's career. If, as he felt, Grigson and Symons had closed their journals at the start of the war out of "a sense that the political urges of the Thirties were becoming irrelevant and that the poetic impetus of the decade was declining with them,"[40] then it was to sustain in a more relevant way the interdependence of literature and politics that Woodcock began his own magazine, _Now_. In his Introduction to the first number of April, 1940, which was mimeographed in Marlow with the cost assumed by a group of local pacifists, he announced that _Now_ would be dominated by no school or clique, would have no bias other than pacifism, and would seek to "perpetuate good writing and clear thought."[41] This dual intention "to publish the best writing we can obtain, and to proclaim our opposition to all war" was re-affirmed in the June/July number.[42]

By this time Woodcock had found a cheap printer and moved to the north-London suburb of Muswell Hill, whence he published the numbers of Autumn 1940 and Easter 1941. Contributors to these early numbers were Woodcock's first literary contacts. Of the _New Verse_ coterie Philip Madge and Kathleen Raine were present, and of the _Twentieth Century Verse_ group Roy Fuller, Keidrych Rhys, and Herbert

Malalieu offered poems while D.S. Savage wrote a pacifist essay. When Woodcock moved to Cambridge the fourth, fifth, and sixth numbers included writings by Alex Comfort and Julian's son, Anthony Huxley.

Then in the summer of 1941 occurred an event that altered not only the quality and direction of Now, but the entire course of Woodcock's life and thought. After Herbert Read had contributed a short essay on Paul Klee to Now 5, Woodcock met Read in Cambridge and under his galvanic influence became an anarchist. Shortly afterward Woodcock applauded in print Read's protest against the tyranny of the state in Poetry and Anarchism (1938), exalting Read as the sole voice of sanity amidst the Communist madness of the late thirties.[43] Agreeing with Read that an anarchic social structure was needed if artistic freedom was to flourish, Woodcock insisted that only in a communal and classless society would the poet "give free expression to the individual and unpredictable urges of creation."[44] Here was the first conjunction between the Romantic concern with the creative process and anarchist theory that became, in later years, an anarcho-Romantic nexus of thought and belief pervading Woodcock's writings.

If Herbert Read is the only person who could be called Woodcock's intellectual mentor, his ideas were given an emotional profundity by his friendship with Marie Louise Berneri, the darkly beautiful daughter of the Italian anarchist leader Camillo Berneri, who had been murdered by the Communists in the streets of Barcelona in 1937.[45] Two months after his meeting with Read in Cambridge Woodcock returned to live in London where he met Berneri "in the little shop which the anarchists ran off Red Lion Square, and that meeting transformed my libertarianism from a passive to an active belief."[46] With her cosmopolitan background, Berneri helped Woodcock to escape his "young provincial self."[47] Under her influence, he joined the anarchists of Kropotkin's Freedom Press and began to work as a writer and later an editor for their magazine, War Commentary. Just after the war ended, most members of the group were jailed for sedition, but since Woodcock was not charged and Berneri was acquitted, the two co-edited the magazine between 1945 and 1949, alternating for six-month stints with two other editors.[48] During this "intense and creative partnership" Berneri taught her partner a great deal about journalism and editing, and convinced him to switch from poetry to prose-writing.[49]

Meanwhile, Now blazoned forth Woodcock's new-found belief in anarchism in its seventh number of fall, 1941. Though the goal of publishing good writing remained, the pacifist bias became an anarchist one. In his opening "Commentary" Woodcock inveighed against the irrational and reactionary Communist Party, quoting Kropotkin's statement that the individual must either conquer the state or be conquered by it.[50] A second series of Now, enlarged and improved in the quality of its printing under the aegis of Freedom Press, was begun in January 1943 and ran through nine numbers until 1947. The new series garnered kudos by publishing more famous writers: Read contributed to eight of its twelve numbers, and Orwell accorded Now first printing of his superb essay "How the Poor Die."[51]

Woodcock's poems of the war years were an intimate record of a time when personal questions such as love, death, faith, morality, and even identity were commingled with cataclysmic historical events such as world war, fascism, genocide, and mass movements of exiles. For the idealist each moment seemed to carry a threat and a challenge to political commitment, and some of Woodcock's poems confessed his alternations between courage and trepidation in facing the terrible existential pressures of the moment. In "Speech from the Dock" the speaker, with a sense of being accused by history for some nameless crime, warned his fellows to eschew hopes of the future and yearnings for the past and to live fully in the present.[52] "Now" presented a symbol for the poet's troubled mentality: a lonely man in a forest pinned by "sniping flight of lead" thought of his love, knowing that the thought was only an instant's barrier against fear.[53]

His best poems of these years abandoned impressionism, however, in favour of a discursive analysis of his own thoughts and emotions. Distraught by his mother's death in the early months of the war and the recent murder of

Trotsky, he watched from "Waterloo Bridge" (1941) to see planes "skywriting madness in incandescent letters."[54] As in "Speech from the Dock" he was burdened by a universal and inexculpable guilt, from which the mind offered no escape, for the constant presence of death made all intellectual striving merely an aspect of "the insidious death of living." Spectres of the famous dead (Blake, Swinburne, Donne, Mozart, Handel) appeared to his mind's eye, uttering the ominous message that...

> ...only our hells
> Are repetitive, and in vain we long
> For the rebirth of momentary heavens.[55]

Despite this sombre beginning, the poem's second movement contained an exultant affirmation of idealism. Woodcock envisioned "the famous dead rising again above the city" and realized that they had triumphed over the external world by living resolutely within their minds; while the cannons spat outside Beethoven's Vienna home, he sat enclosed by deafness with music on his mind. Thus the poet turned to his love like the persona in Matthew Arnold's "Dover Beach," suggesting that they shut out the deadly world and pursue their own truths. By this means they might transcend the death and anomie around them and through a spiritual vision "achieve the harmonies that live/ beyond our little death."[56]

This smug withdrawal into the ataraxy and solace of the monad was not Woodcock's answer, however, for he could not help asking whether his hopes were mere dreams, his prophecies wish-fulfillments -

> If still for us death is the only saviour
> From the mean lesser deaths our failures make
> Under the deadly flowering of the dark.[57]

Here was the wavering between optimism and pessimism that was to mark Woodcock's later writings, but here too was his admission, self-doubt notwithstanding, that he was a rêveur whose social ideals could be reified only in seclusion. In later works he would question the practicability of ideals nurtured in hermitude, recognizing the failure of anarchist theorists to adapt their ideas to the real world. Yet his entire oeuvre would be a testimony that the strength to dream is vital to the moral direction of any social polity, and that visionary thinkers are essential to our society's understanding of itself.

The problematic contingency of public and private worlds was a central theme of many poems in The Centre Cannot Hold (1943), its Yeatsian title suggesting the individual's despairing sense of embattlement in the midst of political chaos. In "Wartime Evening in Cambridge" Woodcock evoked once again the war's ambience of death, and was bewildered by its implication of some universal and inscrutable guilt, seeking in vain to solve "the brooding evening's wrong."[58] This deliquescent awareness of an inexpiable and catalytic guilt was overcome, however, in "The Ruins of London," with its rather dogmatic indictment of a society in which love and freedom had been crushed, by avarice and legal oppression:

> For this is the city where death had domination,
> Whose mansions were the grandiose tombs of youth,
> Grey catacombs where freedoms slept in line,
> Poisoned with gold or strangled by the law,
> Granite sarcophagi of love and truth
> Where the divine lay slain and stuffed with straw.[59]

To his credit, Woodcock did not settle for this puristic condemnation; instead, he went beyond anarchist dogma to find the city lovely in its sorrow "like Niobe over her dead." Admitting that angry words could not turn "The dying pitiful past upon its heel," he recognized that city and men must bear the tortuous throes of social change. The cyclical nature of such social catharses was paralleled by nature's death and rebirth, the inevitability of change being symbolized by "boughs that bud where towers fall."

The one bleak hope in these poems so full of terror was the anarchist belief that the new society would arise, Phoenix-like, from the ashes of the old. The dream of destruction followed by social melioration was placed once again in the context of nature's regeneration in "Sunday on Hampstead Heath," where the poet observed that "the leaves of good/ Burst out on branches dead from winter's hurt."[60] "Poem for Michael Bakunin" celebrated Bakunin's belief in revolution as creative and socially healthy,[61] and "Elegy for Emma Goldman," written in 1942 shortly after the death of "Black Emma," exalted her dream of a new age when "mental cords" would "drop from every slave."[62]

This rather grim optimism was balanced by Woodcock's pessimistic feeling that "man was - perhaps deservedly - doomed":

> At the end of the Thirties when the shadow of war hung over us, and at the end of the war when it looked as though the world would continue in its bad old way, I saw man either dying out ignominiously, or pursued by unnamed furies of his own creation... to an end without dignity.[63]

These furies were portrayed in a series of poetic fantasies in which the fear and guilt of the last man on earth symbolized the zeitgeist of the war years. "Ballad of the End Man" told how mankind was destroyed by its own "skeletons from all cupboards."[64] "The Last Man" surveyed "the manless cities where the rats remain," knowing that soon his own ashes would join those of his brothers.[65] Woodcock shared this apocalyptic vision with several poets who called themselves "the New Apocalyptics," and, though he was independent of the group (including Dylan Thomas, George Barker, David Gascoyne, Philip O'Connor, and Henry Treece), he contributed to their magazines.[66] He recalled that the Twentieth Century Verse cénacle referred to the

New Apocalyptics as "the dotty poets," but admitted that Thomas and Barker "did help to set free a tendency that began to move outside the rather rigid ideological and technical limits of the Auden school, into a style which was more concrete in its imagery and more catholic in its appeal to wider feelings and more personal problems."[67]

In his own poetry of the time personal matters were present but never divorced from the social malaise. Love was poisoned by fear of social upheaval, and the loss of "those tangible beauties of life, which seemed fragile under the shadow of chaos"[68] was symbolized by exile. In "Imagine the South" the condition of Everyman was represented by some beggarly migrants who had left home upon a "bitter journey," and who would discover no new tomorrow but would live in memories of the lost homeland, a land of plenty and sensual delight.[69] Death and exile permeated all aspects of private life during the forties. Woodcock's poems revealed the struggle to live at peace in this atmosphere, and the efforts of an idealist to come to terms with the monstrous evils surrounding him. Hoping to advance some programme for a better future, he strove to overcome the guilt implied by the bond of human brotherhood with the perpetrators of political atrocities. In his dark night of the soul he turned to anarchism partly as an intellectual anodyne, but not as a panacea for social ills. He clung to anarchism because it offered a consistent criticism of political corruption and a slim hope of social change through the very destruction that seemed so ineluctable. Even during these early days his idealism had an underside of profound pessimism and irrepressible self-doubt that would eventually overthrow his faith in the more naive principles of anarchism.

Woodcock's anarchist beliefs were first tested in public debate when, in his London Letter to Partisan Review of January, 1942, George Orwell called pacifists "quisling intellectuals" whose failure to support the English war effort made them "objectively pro-Fascist."[70] Woodcock, D.S. Savage, and Alex Comfort countered in the September-October issue, pointing out errors of fact in Orwell's letter and insisting that pacifism, far from being pro-fascist, was anti-political in nature. Orwell replied with the charge that pacifism was a belief fostered by a cossetted middle-class upbringing: "The idea that you can somehow remain aloof from and superior to the struggle, while living on food which British sailors have to risk their lives to bring you, is a bourgeois illusion bred of money and security."[71] This vitriolic quid pro quo was ill-informed, especially in Woodcock's case, though it did express forcefully the fundamental difference between Orwell's pragmatism and Woodcock's idealism - a difference apparent throughout their friendship.

After this first incommodious encounter, Orwell strove to be conciliatory. In his capacity as propagandist for the Indian Department of the British Broadcasting

Corporation, he invited Woodcock to take part in a radio panel discussion on poetry with Mulk Raj Anand, Herbert Read, William Empson, and Edmund Blunden. Orwell and Woodcock met when the programme was aired on November 3, 1942, and on December 2 Orwell wrote to Woodcock, smoothing over their earlier conflict and complaining of the dullness and imperialist cupidity of his job.[72] They did not meet again until a chance encounter on a bus in late 1943, when Orwell again referred to their first disagreement, saying "There's no reason to let that kind of argument on paper breed personal ill-feeling."[73] From that point onward their serendipity acquaintance was transformed into friendship. Over the next year they met casually at the office of The Tribune, where Orwell had found congenial employment writing for a newspaper that stood for basic human rights. They lunched together often, sometimes with either Herbert Read or Julian Symons in attendance.[74]

Then occurred two incidents which embroiled Woodcock and Orwell in controversy again, though on the same side. In the late summer of 1944 the editorial board of Freedom Press refused, sight unseen, to publish Animal Farm because Orwell was a socialist who supported the war. It was without doubt the biggest mistake in the career of the Press, not only because of the profits the book eventually reaped, but because it furthered the anarchist cause by demonstrating the possibility of political subversion inherent in any socialist revolution. Woodcock opposed the decision vehemently, but was overruled by his colleagues.[75] This was the first of several internecine quarrels that were to lead to his disillusionment with left-wing factionalism, and with activist politics altogether. The incident also represented a clash between Woodcock's anarchist beliefs and his aesthetic judgement; both then and in later years he did not allow the former to submerge the latter.

The second episode had more immediate public repercussions. The February 24th, 1945 number of War Commentary reported that on the night of February 22nd four of the magazine's editors had been charged under Defence Regulation 39A with "endeavouring to seduce from their duties persons in the forces" by distributing seditious literature near army camps and naval barracks.[76] In March and April the anarchist journal carried stories headlined "Glasgow workers call all workers to defence of four London anarchists," "Arrest of four anarchists is taken as threat to freedom of the press in public meetings," and "Herbert Read speaks against Defence Regulations and 'the political police' at crowded London protest meeting."[77] The May 5th number announced that three of the four had been jailed for nine-month terms, while Marie Louise Berneri had been acquitted.[78]

There was a widespread protest against government infringement on basic human rights, though the storm had begun to gather when the paper's offices were raided by

Scotland Yard in late 1944, when Woodcock and Read had circulated a letter of protest which was signed by E.M. Forster, Stephen Spender, and T.S. Eliot, while another group letter bore Orwell's signature.[79] After the incarceration of the three anarchists, a Freedom Defence Committee was formed to fight for civil rights in all such cases. Herbert Read was its Chairman, Woodcock its Secretary, and its original Vice Chairman, Aneurin Bevan, was soon replaced by Orwell. Before the war Orwell had asked Herbert Read to help him to organize illegal anti-war activities, but once the war had begun his patriotism and pragmatism supervened and he made no further protests.[80] Never a pacifist, Orwell joined the Freedom Defence Committee only because it was a non-partisan group with the carefully delimited goal of preventing the excesses of the authorities in the repressive post-war atmosphere. In "Freedom in the Park," his Tribune essay of November, 1945, Orwell supported the Committee's campaign against police encroachments on the traditional right of political groups to sell their publications at the Marble Arch entrance to Hyde Park.[81] According to Woodcock, Orwell spoke at least once "at a public meeting we organized in Conway Hall in support of a general amnesty for people still in prison, many months after hostilities had ended, under various wartime laws and regulations."[82] These public statements were accompanied by donations after the royalties from Animal Farm began to flow in.

Beginning in the spring of 1945, Woodcock and Orwell had frequent meetings in their homes, and when the American Book of the Month Club accepted Animal Farm in 1946 Orwell invited Woodcock to lunch in celebration.[83] Orwell went to the island of Jura in the fall of that year, and when he fell ill Woodcock made several visits to his London home. Though his health was declining, Orwell returned to the cold and misty Scottish island in April, 1947 and spent the following winter there, his remaining two years being occupied mainly with hospital treatments for tuberculosis. Woodcock did not see Orwell during this time, and by April, 1949 had himself sailed for Canada.

From their first contact in the Partisan Review imbroglio, it was apparent that the two men could not agree on political issues. They agreed to disagree not out of incouçiance, but out of mutual respect. Though Orwell did show what Woodcock called an "interested tolerance" toward anarchism, making financial and literary contributions to Now, he did not allow this support to be construed as an endorsement of anarchist ideas. In a 1945 review of Herbert Read's A Coat of Many Colours, he derogated the anarchist principles of limiting technology and accepting a lower standard of living. Orwell implied that the contradictory demands of liberty and efficiency could not be reconciled, arguing that the performance of complex tasks required "a planned, centralized society, with all the repressive apparatus that implies."[84] In a 1946 essay on Gulliver's Travels he asserted that Houyhnhnm society was ruled by the tyranny of public opinion "implicit in the anarchist or pacifist vision of society."[85] Though Woodcock was later to accept this criticism of anarchist ideas, he answered in Freedom (the name having changed from War Commentary a few months after the end of the war) with a fiery defence of anarchist theory; anarchists, he explained, had "consistently attacked the idea of imposing the will of the majority," and had "specifically indicated the evils of uniformity of thought."[86]

These exchanges revealed the fundamental divergence between Orwell's pragmatism and Woodcock's idealism. Orwell entertained a quizzical interest in anarchist thought, but was sometimes caustic in disparaging the impracticability of this beatific social vision. Woodcock was the young and passionate intellectual, eager to follow wherever anarchist theory might lead, even if beyond the bounds of common sense. The difference emerged again in Orwell's letter to Woodcock of 4th January, 1948, wherein he argued that intellectual freedom could be protected only if it constituted a theoretical and not a real threat to the stability of the state.[87] This very conservative stance must have seemed antedeluvian indeed to Woodcock, with his doctrinal view that the power of the state was inherently bad. For his part, Woodcock was not always patient with Orwell's reliance upon the tried and true rules of social cohesion. In an essay that appeared in The Writer and Politics (1948) he suggested that Orwell, in his persona of the plain man, failed to plumb the deeper causes of social disorders.[88] In later years Woodcock would become a more self-critical and ironical apologist for anarchism, but at this time he was a strident proselyte; he has admitted that during the forties he was what Aldous Huxley called a "nothing but" man, and that most of his polemical writings were "embarrassingly doctrinaire."[89]

The most interesting of these grew directly out of his personal experience. His attitude to libertarian social experiments was formed by a six-month sojourn in John Middleton Murry's decayed Edwardian mansion in the Essex marshes. From the autumn of 1940 until Easter, 1941 Woodcock lived there among a queer congeries of "anarchists, left-wing socialists, secular-minded pacifists, Quakers, Plymouth Brethren, Catholics, vegetarians, bicycle-club enthusiasts, esperantists, nudists, and at least one Satanist."[90] In War Commentary (January, 1942) he voiced a qualified sympathy with such isolated efforts, but warned that lasting social change could be precipitated only by "actual participation in contemporary politics," and advocated local organizations with immediate practical aims.[91] The Palestinian kibbutzes had achieved, he felt, the anarchist goals of abolishing money, class barriers, family tyranny, and sexual inequality, and had proven "that men will work even harder with a motive of social usefulness than with the motive of individual profit."[92] Woodcock argued in his pamphlet The Basis of Communal Living (1947) that local groups of producers, consumers, or educators might be more effective in promoting social change than big industrial unions.[93] In later years he would maintain consistently that isolated experimental groups were more likely to survive if they sought not only to be model communities, but had ulterior practical goals.

Personal experience also informed Woodcock's writings on railroads and market gardening. In his pamphlet Railways and Society (1943), reflecting his eleven years of work for the Great Western Railway, he argued for a decentralization of railways, and cautioned that state ownership would lead only to bureaucratic waste and inefficiency.[94] Woodcock's conscientious objection to the war meant that, in order to obtain an exemption from military duty, he worked sporadically for three years as a land labourer, reclaiming neglected fenland farms in the Cambridge area, and as a market gardener in Middlesex.[95] The experience led him to support the existence of small-holders and market gardeners as remnants of the country's dwindling peasantry,[96] and in New Life to the Land (1942) he lamented the tendency of companies to purchase land in large blocks, advising farmers to band together in local collectives.[97]

Other writings deplored wartime social conditions. The government's Youth Service Programme, a plan to take all children into one of the armed services immediately upon graduation from secondary school, was, Woodcock claimed, a sinister scheme to provide "willing slaves and plentiful cannon fodder."[98] He also attacked the Army's notorious Hate Training, "which excelled Nazi methods in sheer sadistic brutality, and had to be abandoned because even the officers protested of its 'unBritish' character."[99] In Homes or Hovels? (1944) he described the housing shortages caused by increasing population, bombing, and lack of new building, but did not offer his own plan for housing in a free society, for anarchists, unlike Utopians, recognize "that men are infinitely diverse in their tastes and that a free society must increase this diversity."[100] This wariness of the coercive dangers of social planning was an important distinction between anarchists and Utopians, but it was also clear evidence that anarchism would never be a useful political programme; as Woodcock realized later, anarchism was really a collection of high ideals, a noble dream that might inspire gradual social change within existing society.

Meanwhile, immediate social problems continued to occupy Woodcock in the post-war years. Repulsed by the war's aftermath of repression and violence, he found a "lack of any real feeling of integrity of the individual human being" in the morbid fascination with concentration camp atrocities, in the public trial and slow strangulation of German soldiers in Kharkov, and in the persecution by members of the French Resistance of women who had consorted with Nazis. He argued that statist politics compelled individuals to regard themselves as ciphers, and ensured that they would treat their fellows as "nameless units without rights or importance."[101] The issue of the moral direction of technology was raised with almost hysterical urgency by the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In 1947 Woodcock reported on a series of radio talks aired by the British Broadcasting Corporation, in which scientists admitted that they had conducted their work on the bomb with complete moral indifference. He warned that science must not be free from all constraints, and that scientists should have an integrated education so that they would also be humanists.[102]

Woodcock also looked beyond his own place and time, exploring the history of anarchism, writing some basic introductions to anarchist theory, and expressing an anarchist's interest in certain periods of English literary history.[103] The Elizabethan and Romantic eras, the Restoration, and the Nineties appealed to him because they nourished eccentricity and accorded greater freedoms to the individual.[104] His literary criticism of the decade was devoted mainly to tracing anarchist themes in unlikely places. He drew attention to Melville's social awareness, finding Billy Budd to be "a comment on the inhumanity of military law, courts martial, and law in general,"[105] and maintaining that Graham Greene's novels concerned the struggle between the common man and the state.[106] Quite correctly, he found the same theme central to Kafka's The Trial and The Castle,[107] and discovered a clearly anarchic statement in Henry Miller's Remember to Remember:

> Today the world is bound, cramped, stifled by those existing forms of government known as the state.... There can be no common good unless the individual is recognized first and foremost - and until the last, the weakest of men is included. Everything proceeds from the living individual.[108]

Fortunately, Woodcock did not assume that the presence or absence of these themes had any direct connection with the quality of a work; indeed, he pointed out that some works containing anarchist themes were full of aesthetic flaws. While he welcomed Aldous Huxley's Ape and Essence as "a protest against all the things which the anarchists reject," he acknowledged that its action was crude, its plot rudimentary, the characters mere types, and the technical devices "Hollywoodish."[109] Though he found anarchic social criticisms in H.G. Wells' "scientific romances" of before 1914, he added that they were marred by weak characterization and an inconsistent sense of verisimilitude.[110] Always careful to distinguish between political and aesthetic considerations, Woodcock would have despised Edward Upward's statement in the appropriately titled The Mind in Chains (1936) that "Literary criticism which aims at being Marxist must... proclaim that no book written at the present time can be 'good' unless it is written from a Marxist or near-Marxist viewpoint."[111] He recalled later, in fact, that Christopher Caudwell's "arid maxims and mechanical analyses of literature represented most faithfully the critical approach that the Comintern favoured and indeed enforced among its adherents."[112]

The strengths and weaknesses of Woodcock's criticism emerged clearly in his articles on Ignazio Silone. He applauded Silone's support of anarchist ideas in his collection of essays, A School for Dictators, and his hero's anguished realization in Bread and Wine that the right ends did not justify any means: Communist Party morality could not be equated with true morality.[113] When Silone returned to Italy to join the Communist-affiliated Socialist Party, Woodcock condemned this perfidy,[114] but when in 1946 he resigned the editorship of Avanti, the Socialist Party organ, and denounced the totalitarian inclinations of all mass political parties, he was welcomed back to the fold.[115] Yet Woodcock was critical of Silone's next novel, A Handful of Blackberries, observing that its portrayal of the struggles of the poor against landowners and police was blunted by didacticism.[116]

Here was further evidence of the independence of Woodcock's criteria of literary excellence from his political beliefs. His refusal to countenance Silone's shift of political allegiance reflected, moreover, the common expectation of the decade that an author should not only espouse political ideas, but should express his convictions in action. Woodcock admired this integrity in the lives and works of Orwell and Huxley, and eventually shaped his own career upon this premise, becoming an author who not only expounded but also embodied anarchist ideals.

Considering this conviction that art and life must be unified, it is ironic that Woodcock turned to writing biographies in the late forties with the assumption that his subjects' personal faults should not be allowed to mitigate their ideas. He was to achieve a more balanced perspective in later years, but in the late forties he was still a very dogmatic libertarian, eager to promote the anarchist ideas of his subjects. As a result, he treated ideas as almost sui generis, providing only elliptical comments on the personalities of those who held them.

In his study of William Godwin (1946) Woodcock noted some of the personal inadequacies of the founder of modern anarchism, but did not draw from them any criticisms of the man's ideas. He acknowledged the philosopher's dour, lugubrious, and childlike character as an adult, remarking only that it stemmed from a gloomy childhood in which Godwin had been the victim of the physical austerity and intellectual oppression of his Calvinist father.[117] Similarly, Woodcock perceived that the benign educationist had a "persistent mother fixation," for after attending his mother's funeral he wrote to his second wife: "The knot is now severed, and I am, for the first time, at more than fifty years of age, alone. You shall now be my mother."[118] Of his tragically brief marriage to Mary Wollstonecraft (lasting only from March to September of 1797 when Mary died in giving birth to a daughter) Woodcock remarked only that his wife's intuition and imagination balanced Godwin's logical and methodical nature.[119] Though he mustered sufficient evidence to demonstrate that Godwin was an ideologue ill-adjusted to life in the real world, he did not consider whether the anarchist's ideas might have been a compensation for obvious personal failings and very unfortunate circumstances.

Nor did Woodcock relate Godwin's personality to the spectacular rise and fall of his career; he preferred to overlook such endogenous influences, seeing Godwin as at first the hero of his revolutionary age, and then the scapegoat for its failed idealism - and indeed there was some evidence for this view. With the publication of Political Justice in 1793 Godwin was hailed as the prophet of political freedom and praised by Coleridge and Wordsworth.[120] When several radicals were accused summarily of high treason, Godwin wrote a pamphlet defending them and all were acquitted; Hazlitt called it "one of the most acute and seasonable pamphlets that ever appeared."[121] Yet only five years later Godwin was deprecated on all sides as "too visionary."[122] Wordsworth abandoned him, claiming that his coldly abstract thought denied all human passion.[123] For the remaining twenty-odd years of his life the poor man eked out a living by literary hack-work, enduring the calumny heaped upon him by his seventeen-year-old daughter's scandalous elopement with Shelley, and the tangle of affairs and suicides that ensued.

In Political Justice, Godwin sided with Rousseau and Tom Paine in insisting that government must protect man's inalienable or "natural" rights, meaning rights determined by the exercise of man's innate moral faculty, and opposed Edmund Burke's view that social man's only rights were those established by convention. Many of Godwin's ideas were derived from Rousseau's teachings, including the argument that education should seek to develop the child's latent abilities, putting the will of the student before that of the teacher.[124] Elaborating Rousseau's dictum that "Man was born free and is everywhere in chains," Godwin argued that property should be abolished because it distracted man from a knowledge of intrinsic values; that the Church merely dispensed fear and guilt; that education acted mainly as a propaganda agent for government; that government robbed people of their independence by imposing moral behaviour through force; and that legal punishments, far from making men wise, could "hardly fail of making them timid, dissembling, and corrupt."[125] As Frank Podmore commented, Godwin's debt to Rousseau was immense:

> He was a prophet of the tradition of Rousseau: his gospel, the essential goodness of human nature; all crime and other suffering proceeded from the

> governments and other circumstances created by the perversity of men in the past. Let those governments be abolished, those circumstances re-created, give the natural instincts free play, and man will rise to his full stature and perfection.[126]

If Woodcock's account of Godwin's ideas had contained Podmore's acerbity, or if he had considered that Godwin's anarchist ideals might have compensated for personal deficiencies and hardships, his portrait would have been fairer and more comprehensive. As it was, the book was flawed by an unrelenting tone of advocacy and a lack of biographical circumspection. In later biographies Woodcock would achieve a greater critical detachment, and his subjects' ideas and lives would be more carefully interrelated, but in the late forties his belief in the autonomy of ideas subserved his polemical intentions.

The urge to portray his subject as typical of his or her age predominated also in The Incomparable Aphra (1948). Woodcock found that Aphra Behn exemplified both the libertinism and the liberty of the Restoration period:

> ... she had all the broad, passionate vigour of the age, sparkling, courageous, and more than a little coarse. Moreover, her innovations were so mingled with contradictory beliefs that she herself could quite sincerely support an absolute monarch and damn a political rebellion, while she helped to set on their destructive way those fermenting tendencies of social change which still, in our day, have not spent themselves as revolutionary impulses.[127]

There was some reason to view Behn as an early exponent of certain revolutionary principles; she was, as Woodcock noted, a feminist and the first woman in English literary history to earn her living by writing,[128] and she launched anarchic tirades against marriage, slavery, and organized religion.[129] In an age when personal allegiances often mattered more than party ones, it was possible for Behn to maintain such radical views along with what Woodcock called "an odd jumble of emotional and unthinking loyalties" to the King and the Duke of York.[130] He inferred, however, that Behn gave little thought to her conservative beliefs, whereas her libertarian social criticisms expressed her most profound convictions.

This aggrandizement of Behn's stature as a radical thinker was accompanied by an over-estimation of the freedoms of Restoration society. "No group, either court, or city, or country landowners, could exercise a great ascendancy of power over the rest" he asserted; "consequently, in this period, England enjoyed a beneficial lack of government authority."[131] Unless "England" was merely a synecdoche for the aristocracy or gentry, it is difficult to credit Woodcock's argument, for it is obvious that this putative lack of authority was really a conflict of power that had very few benefits for the populace as a whole. Woodcock himself admitted that even when the poor of London were especially abject after the Great Fire of 1666, the court and the wealthy merchants squandered vast sums on luxuries.[132] Nor were there very strong arguments for the enhanced liberty of the average citizen in his suggestions that "there was tyranny, but it was sporadic and inefficient," or that "the general level of freedom and immunity from interference was much higher than under the Commonwealth."[133] The stalemate of power between King and gentry allowed only a more liberal expression of political opinion, and radical ideas often went no further than the theatres.

Woodcock also attached unwarranted significance to the revolutionary themes of Behn's novel, Oroonoko (1688), calling it a treatise against slavery and an early expression of the ideal of the noble savage, "the great conception of natural human goodness that served as the mythos of the Enlightenment, and inspired such revolutionary thinkers as the Encyclopaedists, Rousseau, Voltaire, Tom Paine and Godwin, the theoreticians of a century of revolutions."[134] It is true that the handsome black prince Oroonoko delivered a jeremiad against "the miseries and ignominies of slavery" while being tortured by brutal colonial officials. This incident occurred, however, after a series of picaresque adventures involving a strong love interest in which Oroonoko himself was portrayed as a slave-King. The attack on slavery and the exaltation of the noble savage were mere accoutrements to the central tale of love and adventure; the novel was only incidentally a political tract.

Also overstated were Woodcock's claims for the book's literary innovations. Observing that Behn had anticipated Defoe in using the narrative pose of objective reportage, and that the general sense of realism carried "the artificial figure of Oroonoko into the sunlight of reality," he declared that this was "unquestionably the first English realistic novel."[135] Certainly Lore Metzger put the case more accurately in stating that this story of mythical grandeur imposed "the novelist's point of view upon romance material at a time when a clear distinction between the two narrative forms was just beginning to emerge."[136]

Woodcock did perform an important service in counterbalancing the unfair prejudice of her age that Behn was an immoral woman and a prurient writer. He recorded the scurrilous traducements against her,[137] and countered them with Cibber's comments, in his Lives of the Poets (1759) that supercilious prudes had construed her sprightliness as lewdness, assuming that "because she had wit and beauty, she must also be charged with prostitution and irreligion."[138] Yet in emphasizing her libertarian idealism, he tended to skim over her more ignoble traits. She indulged in the vicious *badinage* of her age, and was never unwilling to launch an unscrupulous attack on political opponents.[139] Though she criticized the fashionable vices of her time, she was not above pandering to them; Woodcock admitted that her play The Roundheads contained "a wholly ridiculous series of accusations of cowardice, drunkenness, lasciviousness, etc."[140] He also recorded her public flattery of the King's mistress, Nell Gwyn,[141] and the fact of her rich erotic life marked by many liaisons with young poets.[142] Finally, Woodcock's portrait of Behn as an anarchist individualist gave the impression of a monochrome, in which the many un-libertarian tendencies of her character and her age were over-coloured. His anarchist bias would remain in later years, but it would be more cogently supported, and restrained by greater biographical objectivity.

When Woodcock came to Canada, his reasons for leaving England were threefold. First, the late forties in England were years of Austerity and Stafford Cripps, and he had had enough of hard times. Second, the bitter factional disputes among anarchists and leftists of his acquaintance had discouraged him from further political activism. Third, he believed that he no longer needed the incessant stimulation of contact with other writers: "I had spent a decade in the London literary world, and I had gained all I could in the way of debate and re-assurance from moving in writers' circles, and now, in my middle thirties, I recognized that the time had come to go away and find my real voice again."[143]

Canada was his chosen destination because, having been born in Winnipeg, he was entitled to a Canadian passport, and because he had imbibed his father's memories and also his failed dreams of an independent life in the Canadian wilderness. Woodcock and his wife nurtured fantasies of combining mental and manual work in a rural setting, and found the opportunity to pursue them when, "like a legendary messenger, a Canadian seaman turned up at the anarchist bookshop in Red Lion Street with nostalgic tales about British Columbia and persuaded my wife and me that here was an earthly paradise and that we had only to join him on the land he was buying at Sooke on Vancouver Island to enjoy its plenitudes."[144]

The end of this phase of his life was punctuated by the deaths of two dear friends. The dramatic manner in which he came to know of the first was, for Woodcock, a proof of Jung's concept of synchronicity:

> On the 14th April, 1949, my ship lay overnight in the Halifax harbour and I dreamt that Marie Louise Berneri was dead. A week later, when I reached Victoria after a train journey over the continent, a cable was awaiting me to say that she had indeed died, on 14th April, suddenly and without warning.[145]

Shortly afterward Woodcock contributed an elegiac article to Freedom, praising Berneri's virtues and accomplishments, and remarking that her death seemed to mark "the end of an epoch."[146] This feeling must have been intensified when, at a party in Vancouver on 20 January, 1950, he received the news of Orwell's death.[147] It was the end of Woodcock's poetic dark night of the soul and of his years of anarchist activism; after this watershed, he became mainly a prose-writer and a scholar of anarchism. His political commitment acquired a stronger tincture of irony and self-criticism as he defined his own humane and moral version of anarchist theory, and explored its diverse implications.

NOTES

1. George Woodcock, Canada and the Canadians (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1970), p. 13.

2. George Woodcock, "The World of Time: Notes towards an Autobiography," Aurora: New Canadian Writing, ed. Morris Wolfe (Toronto: Doubleday, 1980), p. 266.

   In Canada and the Canadians, pp. 14-15, Woodcock wrote in lyrical detail of his father's memories and hopes and their eventual effect upon his return to Canada: "It was he who longed to return and resume his life in Canada; it is I who have done it. When I was ten years old, we made plans for that return. We would go to the Peace River, far over the prairies, where the great white mountains would lie on the horizon; build ourselves a house of poplar logs and walk in autumn through our fields of wheat billowing in the wind; make beehives to catch the sweet honey of the prairie flowers and grow melons in cold frames according to the pamphlets distributed by the Canadian immigration agent who one day in the twenties appeared with a van full of propaganda in the square of our little town."

3. George Woodcock, "An Interview with George Woodcock," by Geoff Hancock, Canadian Fiction Magazine, Nos. 30/31 (1979), p. 132.

4. Woodcock, Hancock Interview, CFM, p. 135.

5. Woodcock, "The World of Time," Aurora, p. 265.

6. Woodcock, "The World of Time," Aurora, pp. 264-265.

7. Woodcock, Hancock Interview, CFM, p. 134.

8. Woodcock, Hancock Interview, CFM, p. 140.

9. Woodcock, "The World of Time," Aurora, pp. 250-251.

10. Woodcock, "World of Time," Aurora, p. 252.

11. Woodcock, "World of Time," Aurora, p. 267.

12. Woodcock, Hancock Interview, CFM, p. 133.

13. George Woodcock, "Fragments from a Tenth-Hour Journal," Northern Journey, No. 3 (1973), p. 28.

14. George Woodcock, Dawn and the Darkest Hour: A Biographical Study of Aldous Huxley (London: Faber, 1972), p. 14.

15. Woodcock, Huxley, p. 13.

16. Woodcock, Huxley, p. 25.

17. Woodcock, Huxley, p. 15.

18. Woodcock, Huxley, p. 25.
In "Fragments from a Tenth-Hour Journal," NJ, pp. 30-31, Woodcock provided some details of his own parapsychological experiences, and distinguished them from religious experience proper:

> "When the death of the anarchist Marie Louise Berneri - a totally unexpected death - was communicated to me 3,000 miles away by a dream voice at the very hour of her death; when with six other people who knew him I saw a man of distinctive and bizarre appearance six months after he had shot himself - unknown to all of us - I was not struck by the wonder of these experiences so much as by their unsensational, their natural quality; I knew I was moving in no dimension of the supernatural, but merely in a realm of natural experience as yet uncompletely charted."

19. Woodcock, "Fragments," NJ, p. 37.

20. George Woodcock, "Memoirs of Red Lion Street," Applegarth's Folly, No. 2 (1976), p. 19.

21. Letter received from George Woodcock, 1st January, 1981.

22. George Woodcock, Summer Fire to Arctic Winter: Notes on the Author's Career as a Poet, for CBC's Saturday Evening, 13th May, 1965.
All references are to the CBC recording of the talk, held at the CBC Radio Archive, 90 Sumach St., Toronto, Ontario.
The poems appeared in Notes on Visitations: Poems, 1936-1975 (Toronto: Anansi, 1975); "Summer Fire,"

p. 46; "Winter Wheat," p. 48; "Sawmill," p. 49.

23. Geoffrey Grigson, editorial, New Verse (Summer, 1938), p. 17.

24. Woodcock, Notes, p. 27.

25. George Woodcock, "The Island," Selected Poems (Vancouver: Clarke, Irwin, 1967), p. 18; first pub. Twentieth Century Verse (Dec., 1938), p. 134.

26. George Woodcock, "Memorandum from Arcadia," Selected Poems, p. 17; first pub. New Verse (Summer, 1938), p. 10.

27. Woodcock, "Breughel," Notes, p. 31; first pub. The Centre Cannot Hold (London: Routledge, 1943), pp. 9-10.

28. Woodcock, "Gods," Selected Poems, p. 20; first pub. Twentieth Century Verse (February, 1939), p. 155.

29. Woodcock, "The Hero," Notes, p. 32; first. pub. as "Odysseus," Now (Easter, 1940), p. 16.

30. Woodcock, "The Announcer's Speech," Selected Poems, p. 25; first pub. Twentieth Century Verse (April-May, 1939), p. 11.

31. George Woodcock, "Poetry Magazines of the Thirties: A Personal Note," Tamarack Review, No. 60 (1973), p. 72.

32. Woodcock, "Poetry Magazines of Thirties," TR, p. 68.

33. Julian Symons, editorial, Twentieth Century Verse, No. 1 (January, 1937), p. 2.

34. Woodcock, "Poetry Magazines of Thirties," TR, p. 72.

35. Woodcock, "Memoirs of Red Lion Street," AF, p. 21.

36. George Woodcock, "History and the Spanish Civil War," Tamarack Review (Winter, 1962), p. 77. "More even than the Moscow trials," he recalled, "what happened in Spain changed within a year or so the dominant attitude of the British literary left, and here the enigmatic figure of Auden, returning in silent disappointment from the field of action, became as much the type figure for the end of the Thirties as he had been for the idealistic beginning of the decade."

37. George Woodcock, "The Lotus Eaters," Now, 2nd Series, No. 1 (1943), p. 5.

38. George Orwell, "Inside the Whale," The Collected Essays, Journalism, and Letters of George Orwell, ed. Sonia Orwell & Ian Angus (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968), Vol. I, p. 567.

39. Orwell, "Inside the Whale," CEJL, Vol. I, p. 566.

40. George Woodcock, "Now: An Heir to the Thirties," Modernist Studies, Vol. 1, No. 2 (1974), p. 21.

41. George Woodcock, "Introduction," Now, 1st Series, No. 1 (Easter, 1940), p. 1.

42. George Woodcock, "Introduction," Now, 1st Series, No. 2 (June-July, 1940), p. 1.

43. George Woodcock, "The 1930's and Herbert Read," War Commentary, 3, No. 10 (Mid-April, 1942), pp. 13-14.

44. Woodcock, "1930's and Read," WC, p. 14.

45. George Woodcock, Herbert Read: The Stream and the Source (London: Faber, 1972), pp. 234-235.

46. Woodcock, Read, p. 235.

47. Woodcock, "Memoirs of Red Lion Street," AF, p. 23.

48. Woodcock, Hancock Interview, CFM, p. 137.

49. Woodcock, "Memoirs of Red Lion Street, AF, p. 23.

50. George Woodcock, "Commentary," Now, 1st Series, No. 7 (autumn, 1941), pp. 34-36.

51. George Woodcock, The Crystal Spirit: A Study of George Orwell (Boston: Little, Brown, 1966), p. 28.

52. George Woodcock, "Speech from the Dock," Notes, p. 76; first pub. Kingdom Come (Nov./ Dec., 1941), p. 29.

53. George Woodcock, "Now," Notes, p. 54; first pub. The White Island (London: Fortune Press, 1940), p. 7.

54. George Woodcock, "Waterloo Bridge," Notes, p. 6; first pub. Now (Summer, 1941), pp. 11-15.

55. Woodcock, "Waterloo Bridge," Notes, p. 6.

56. Woodcock, "Waterloo Bridge," Notes, p. 11.

57. Woodcock, "Waterloo Bridge," Notes, p. 11.

58. George Woodcock, "Wartime Evening in Cambridge," Notes, p. 16; first pub. as "Evening in Cambridge," in Now (Easter, 1941), p. 14.

59. George Woodcock, "The Ruins of London," Notes, pp. 12-14; see "The Ruins of the City," Centre, pp. 10-11.

60. George Woodcock, "Sunday on Hampstead Heath," Notes, pp. 3-4; first pub. The Centre Cannot Hold, pp. 7-8.

61. George Woodcock, "Poem for Michael Bakunin," Notes, p. 17; first pub. The Centre Cannot Hold, pp. 10-11.

62. George Woodcock, "Elegy for Emma Goldman," Notes, pp. 18-19; first pub. in The Centre Cannot Hold, pp. 33-34; see also "Emma Goldman: A Letter and a Poem," A George Woodcock Reader, ed. Doug Fetherling (Ottawa: Deneau & Greenberg, 1980), pp. 42-44.

63. Woodcock, Notes, p. 64.

64. George Woodcock, "Ballad of the End Man," Notes, p. 65.

65. George Woodcock, "The Last Man," Notes, p. 66.

66. Woodcock, Notes, p. 1.
"The New Apocalyptics" were by no means a tightly-knit group, as can be seen by the list of contributors to their three anthologies, edited by J.F. Hendry and Henry Treece. The New Apocalypse (1939) included Dylan Thomas, Philip O'Connor, Nicholas Moore, Norman McCaig, and Dorian Cooke, while Thomas, O'Connor, and Cooke were absent from The White Horseman (1941), but G.S. Fraser, Tom Scott, and Vernon Watkins were added. Finally, Crown and Sickle (1942) contained a great many new poets, with only the editors represented from the earlier anthologies!

67. George Woodcock, Recent English Poetry (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1950), p. 10.
The pamphlet is the text of a lecture given at the University of British Columbia, on 24th January, 1950.

68. Woodcock, Recent English Poetry, p. 4
Woodcock spoke of "the prevailing temper of the decade, the hopeless nostalgia, the sense of inevitable tragedy, the love for those tangible beauties of life, which seemed fragile under the shadow of chaos."

69. George Woodcock, "Imagine the South," Notes, p. 29; first pub. The Centre Cannot Hold, pp. 19-20.

70. George Orwell, "London Letter to Partisan Review," 1st January, 1942, CEJL, Vol. 2, pp. 213, 210.

71. George Orwell, "Pacifism and the War: A Controversy, by D.S. Savage, George Woodcock, Alex Comfort, George Orwell," CEJL, Vol. 2, p. 261.
It is very likely that Woodcock struck a chord of guilt when he reminded Orwell of his own inconsistent beliefs and actions, stressing his involvement in the fascist cause of British imperialism (pp. 258-259):
"I would also point out that if we are to expose antecedents, Orwell himself does not come out very well. Comrade Orwell, the former police official of British imperialism (from which the Fascists learnt all they know) in those regions of the Far East where the sun at last sets over the bedraggled Union Jack! Comrade Orwell, former fellow-traveller of the pacifists and regular contributor to the pacifist Adelphi - which he now attacks! Comrade Orwell, former extreme left-winger, I.L.P. partisan and defender of Anarchists (see Homage to Catalonia)! And now Comrade Orwell who returns to his old imperialist allegiances and works at the B.B.C. conducting British propaganda to fox the Indian masses! It would seem that Orwell himself shows to a surprising degree the overlapping of left-wing, pacifist, and reactionary tendencies of which he accuses others!"

72. George Orwell, letter to George Woodcock, 2nd December, 1942, CEJL, Vol. 2, pp. 306-307.

73. Woodcock, Orwell, p. 10.

74. Woodcock, Orwell, p. 13.

75. Woodcock, Orwell, p. 14.

76. War Commentary, 6, No. 9 (Feb. 24, 1945), p. 1.

77. War Commentary, 6, No. 10 (March 10, 1945), p. 1.
War Commentary, 6, No. 12 (April 7, 1945), p. 4.
War Commentary, 6, No. 13 (April 21, 1945), p. 1.

78. War Commentary, 6, No. 14 (May 5, 1945), p. 1.

79. Woodcock, Orwell, p. 16.

80. George Orwell, "Letter to Herbert Read," 4th January, 1939, CEJL, Vol. 1, pp. 414-415.

81. George Orwell, "Freedom in the Park," *CEJL*, Vol. 1, pp. 57-60.

82. Woodcock, *Orwell*, p. 18.

83. Woodcock, *Orwell*, pp. 33-36.

84. George Orwell, rev. of *A Coat of Many Colours: Occasional Essays*, by Herbert Read, *CEJL*, Vol. 4, p. 70.

85. George Orwell, "Politics vs. Literature: An Examination of *Gulliver's Travels*, *CEJL*, Vol. 4, p. 252.

86. George Woodcock, "Anarchism and Public Opinion," *Freedom*, 8, No. 10 (June 28, 1947), p. 2.

87. George Orwell, "Letter to George Woodcock," 4th January, 1948, *CEJL*, Vol. 4, p. 456.

88. George Woodcock, "George Orwell," *The Writer and Politics* (London: Porcupine Press, 1948), pp. 121-122.

89. George Woodcock, *Dawn and the Darkest Hour: A Study of Aldous Huxley* (London: Faber, 1972), p. 15.

George Woodcock, *The Rejection of Politics and other Essays* (Toronto: New Press, 1972), pp. xi, 30.

90. Woodcock, "*Now*: An Heir of the Thirties," *Modernist Studies*, p. 24.

91. George Woodcock, "Limitations of Community," *War Commentary*, (January, 1942), pp. 5-6, 8.

92. George Woodcock, "The Palestinian Collectives: A Demonstration of some Libertarian Principles," *Freedom*, 8, No. 18 (October 18, 1947), pp. 2-3.

93. George Woodcock, *The Basis of Communal Living* (London: Freedom Press, 1947), 44 pp.
Woodcock encouraged communal experiments that would not be isolated, but integrated in the existing social structure (pp. 40-41):

> "Our present English communities, unlike the communities of Spain, are groups of people who stand out in society because they hold minority opinions. They are all converts, even fanatical converts, to the ideas their communities represent, and for this very reason, attract little interest and less direct participation, from the mass of working men and women.... What is needed is a kind of community

> which in some way links together the lives of men and women who still work in ordinary employment, who are up against the hard day-to-day struggle, and who, for that very reason, are all the more in need of the benefits of a genuine communal existence..."

94. George Woodcock, Railways and Society (London: Freedom Press, 1943), p. 23.
Woodcock noted that the four railway combines, while they remained capitalist undertakings, formed a "bureaucratic system, with its attendant ruthlessness, inefficiency, nepotism, and corruption" which was second only to the civil service. (p. 11) He relied upon his own experience to demonstrate "the extent to which railway bureaucracies contrive(d) to make unnecessary work" (p. 20), and advised that the dangers of nationalisation could be avoided and the benefits of decentralism obtained by a network of syndicalist unions, though the syndicalist power structure, as Woodcock described it, would seem ill-equipped to deal with the conflicting interests of local unions and the federal co-ordinating committee:
"The workers of each factory or depôt or farm are an autonomous unit, who govern their own affairs and who make all the decisions as to the work they will do. These units are joined federally in a syndicate which serves to co-ordinate the actions of the workers in each industry. The federal organisation has no authority over the workers in any branch, and cannot impose a veto on action like a trade union executive. It has no permanent bureaucracy, and the few privileged officials are chosen on a short-term basis, have no privileges which raise their standard of living above that of the workers, and wield no authority of any kind" (p. 25).

95. For a poetic record of this experience, see "Pacifists" and "The Conchy's Lament," Notes, pp. 20, 21; first pub. in The Centre Cannot Hold, "Pacifists" under the title of "Conscientious Objectors," pp. 25-26, and "The Conchy's Lament" under the title of "Winter Rain," pp. 14-15.

96. George Woodcock, "Smallholders and Market Gardeners," War Commentary, 4, No. 4 (Mid-December, 1942), pp. 3-4.

97. George Woodcock, New Life to the Land (London: Freedom Press, 1942), p. 31. As in the later pamphlet, Woodcock did not answer adequately the question of conflicts of interest; he seems to have assumed naively that these problems would not arise, or that they would be minimised by the good will of all

concerned, for he argued, without showing in detail how this could be arranged, that the syndicalist system would avoid an accretion of rules and regulations:

"Each village union would be autonomous and would make and pursue its own decisions without the dictatorial centrism that characterizes and stunts normal trade unionism. The village unions would, however, be joined in county federations for common action and mutual assistance, and the county federations would be united in a national federation."

Such a system seems designed to increase rather than to decrease bureaucratic waste and corruption. Yet, Woodcock was diligent in proving that the War Agricultural Committees administered farming and land renewal in an inefficient way. Again he referred to his own experience: "on the committee by which I was employed the actual field work was little better administered than the labour questions. Drains and ditches were dug by means of guesswork, without any previous surveys having been made - often with the consequence that the work had to be duplicated until the field was a network of intersecting drains" (pp. 12-13).

98. George Woodcock, "The Child and the State," War Commentary, 5, No. 6 (Mid-January, 1944), p. 14.

99. George Woodcock, "Obscenity," War Commentary, 3, No. 14 (Mid-June, 1942), p. 11.

100. George Woodcock, Homes or Hovels: The Housing Problem and its Solution (London: Freedom Press, 1944), p. 31. After presenting a convincing case for slum removal, Woodcock offered only an idealistic dream of the housing of the future, suggesting that it would be bright and clean, would allow for privacy and admit plenty of fresh air, and would obey the twin aesthetic principles of variety and harmony. (p. 32)

101. George Woodcock, "The Triumph of Brutality," Freedom, 6, No. 17 (June 16, 1945), p. 6.

102. George Woodcock, "Aspects of Atomic Energy," Freedom, 8, No. 6 (March 22, 1947), p. 6.

103. For articles on the history of anarchism, see:

Woodcock, "Pages of Revolutionary History: Gerard Winstanley and the Digger Movement," War Commentary, 3, No. 6 (Mid-February, 1942), pp. 5-6.

Woodcock, "May Day and the Two Americas," War Commentary, 3, No. 11 (May, 1942), pp. 6-7.

Woodcock, "English Revolutionary Unionism and the Nineteenth Century," War Commentary, 3, No. 13 (June, 1942), pp. 10-11.

Woodcock, "Godwin," War Commentary, 3, No. 19 (September, 1942), pp. 13-14.

Woodcock, "Michael Bakunin," War Commentary, 3, No. 20 (Mid-September, 1942), pp. 11-12; cont'd 3, No. 21 (October, 1942), pp. 11-12.

Woodcock, "Peter Kropotkin," War Commentary, 4, No. 3 (December, 1942), pp. 5-6, 10.

Woodcock, "The Development of Syndicalism," War Commentary, 3, No. 22 (Mid-October, 1942), pp. 3-4.

For articles and pamphlets on anarchist theory, see:

Woodcock, Anarchy or Chaos (London: Freedom Press, 1944), 124 pp.

Woodcock, Anarchism and Morality (London: Freedom Press, 1945), 16 pp.

Woodcock, What is Anarchism? (London: Freedom Press, 1945), 13 pp.

Woodcock, "Aspects of Anarchism," War Commentary, 6, No. 18 (June 30, 1945), p. 2; cont'd 6, No. 22 (Aug. 25, 1945), p. 2.

104. Woodcock's anarchist views of the Restoration, the Romantic period, and the Nineties, were expressed, of course, in his books on Behn, Godwin, and Wilde. For articles on the Restoration and the Elizabethan era, see:

Woodcock, "Culture and Society in the Restoration Period," Now, 2nd Series, No. 1 (January, 1943), pp. 55-62.

Woodcock, "The Elizabethan Anarchy," Freedom, 9, No. 2 (Jan. 24, 1948), p. 2.

105. George Woodcock, "Literary Notes," Freedom, 8, No. 9 (June 14, 1947), p. 6.
For Woodcock's view of Melville, see also:
George Woodcock, "Herman Melville," Freedom, 8,

No. 3 (February 1st, 1947), pp. 6-7.

106. George Woodcock, "Graham Greene," Now, 2nd Series, No. 6 (1946), pp. 9-26.

107. Woodcock, "Literary Notes," Freedom, 8, No. 9 June 14, 1947), p. 6.

108. George Woodcock, "Literary Notes," Freedom, 9, No. 5 (March 6, 1948), p. 6.
See also Woodcock's editorial, "The Miller Case," Now, "2nd Series, No. 7 (Feb.-March, 1947), pp. 5-6, where he disparaged those who believed that Miller's books should be banned: "The real grudge they have against Miller is that he is a dynamic social critic, and that he uses his obscenity as a means of jerking people into consciousness of corruption in the world where they live. Miller is being persecuted not because his books are obscene, but because they are subversive." It was a far cry from Orwell's comments, in "Inside the Whale," CEJL, Vol. 1, p. 548, on the passivity of Miller's Whitmanesque acceptance:

> "To say 'I accept' in an age like our own is to say that you accept concentration camps. rubber truncheons, Hitler, Stalin, bombs, aeroplanes, tinned food, machine-guns, putsches, purges, slogans, Bedaux belts, gas-masks, submarines, spies, provocateurs, press censorship, secret prisons, aspirins, Hollywood films, and political murders. Not only those things of course, but those things among others. And on the whole this is Henry Miller's attitude."

The striking contrast between the two attitudes to Miller illuminates the mystical and decadent aspects of Woodcock's thought and sensibility.

109. George Woodcock, rev. of Ape and Essence, by Aldous Huxley, Freedom, 10, No. 13 (May 28, 1949), p. 2.

110. George Woodcock, "A Study in Decline," Now, 2nd Series, No. 9 (July/August, 1947), pp. 42-51.

111. Quoted in George Orwell, "Inside the Whale," CEJL, Vol. 1, p. 572.

112. George Woodcock, "Marxist Critics," A George Woodcock Reader, p. 206.

113. George Woodcock, "The Strange Case of Ignazio Silone," Freedom, 6, No. 19 (July 14, 1945), pp. 2-3.

114. George Woodcock, "Freedom and Ignazio Silone," Freedom, 7, No. 19 (Sept. 7, 1946), p. 2.

When Paul Potts wrote a letter to Freedom protesting that Woodcock had shown a "closed heart" and a lack of "human reverence" toward a great artist, Woodcock replied: "I should have never have thought to criticize Silone merely because he did not act like an anarchist, if he had not written so much like an anarchist."

115. George Woodcock, "Silone Resigns Political Post," Freedom, 7, No. 17 (August 10, 1946), p. 4.

116. George Woodcock, "Silone's New Novel," rev. of A Handful of Blackberries by Ignazio Silone, Freedom, 15, No. 22 (May 29, 1954), p. 2.

117. George Woodcock, William Godwin: A Biographical Study (London: Porcupine Press, 1946), p. 7. Woodcock did not consider that this kind of home life could have warped Godwin's personality, but only that it gave him some wrongs against which to battle:

> "Having been in his youth the victim of physical austerity and the tyranny of ideas enforced by others, William Godwin took as his life's work the liberation of man from the slavery of the mind and thence from the bondage of material coercion. Above all, he struggled for the freedom of children from the dominant opinions of their parents and masters."

118. Woodcock, Godwin, p. 198.

119. Woodcock, Godwin, p. 138.

120. Woodcock, Godwin, p. 99.

121. Woodcock, Godwin, p. 110.

122. Woodcock, Godwin, pp. 116-117.

123. Woodcock, Godwin, p. 99.

124. Woodcock, Godwin, p. 24.

125. Woodcock, Godwin, pp. 88, 29, 80, 58, 56.

126. quoted in Woodcock, Godwin, p. 168.

127. George Woodcock, The Incomparable Aphra (London: T.V. Boardman, 1948), p. 239.

128. Woodcock, Aphra, pp. 133, 71, 9. Virginia Woolf also respected Behn for surviving financially as a writer, and thereby winning for women the right to speak their minds. In A Room of

One's Own (London: Granada Publishing, 1977) she praised Behn for being the first woman to earn a living as a writer, but admitted that she did not think highly of Behn's character. Woolf stated acridly that Behn's burial in Westminster Abbey was scandalous, and that she "proved that money could be made by writing at the sacrifice, perhaps, of certain agreeable qualities" (pp. 62-63).

129. Woodcock, *Aphra*, p. 151.

130. Woodcock, *Aphra*, pp. 150-151.

131. Woodcock, *Aphra*, pp. 26-27.

132. Woodcock, *Aphra*, p. 39.

133. Woodcock, *Aphra*, pp. 26-27.

134. Woodcock, *Aphra*, p. 230.

135. Woodcock, *Aphra*, pp. 237-238.

136. Lore Metzger, Introduction to *Oroonoko*, by Aphra Behn (New York, Norton, 1973), p. x.

137. Tom Brown and Robert Gould suggested that Behn gave her favours to male writers for the price of collaboration in her plays and then bought their applause by the same means (p. 103), and when her beauty began to wane she was accused of pretending to a power of erotic conquest no longer hers (p. 173), while her fatal illness was said to have been caused by harlotry (p. 193). Pope's witty couplet dismissed her as an erotic writer: "The stage how loosely does Astrea tread/ Who safely puts all characters to bed." Yet Dryden praised her evocations of love: "She who so well cou'd love's kind passion paint/ We piously believe must be a Saint" (*Aphra*, p. 102).

138. Woodcock, *Aphra*, p. 8.

139. Woodcock, *Aphra*, p. 150.

140. Woodcock, *Aphra*, p. 154.

141. Woodcock, *Aphra*, p. 140.

142. Woodcock, *Aphra*, p. 102.

143. Woodcock, Hancock Interview, *CFM*, p. 139.

144. Woodcock, Hancock Interview, *CFM*, p. 140.

145. Woodcock, "Memoirs of Red Lion Street," AF, p. 24.

146. Woodcock, "Marie Louise Berneri," Freedom, 10, No. 13 (May 28, 1949), p. 6.

147. Woodcock, Orwell, p. 49.

CHAPTER II

AN ANARCHIST IN CANADA

When Woodcock and his wife came to Canada in April, 1949, they settled near Sooke on Vancouver Island and over the next two years built two houses there. At first they earned money by ditch digging and market gardening, and quite soon Woodcock began to write radio talks and plays for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. He found the Canadian cultural scene "as bleak as a Winnipeg winter" except for the CBC, which seemed "like the Thelon River running through the Barren Land."[1] By July, 1950, Woodcock was able to inform Herbert Read that he was doing a lot of radio work: "The CBC is trying to infuse some interest in literature into Canadian life, and I have managed to persuade them to put on some pretty serious talks about people like Silone, Orwell, Malraux, Greene, yourself, and I am now presenting a series on the classic Russian novelists."[2] These were hard times for Woodcock, for the CBC cheques were meagre, and the English royalties from his earlier books were depleted by the fall in the pound.[3] A Guggenheim Fellowship brought reprieve for a year and in 1953, having proven themselves lamentable market gardeners, he and his wife moved to Vancouver.

At that time and later Woodcock did some writing mainly for monetary gain; indeed, writing for pecuniary reasons became an almost constant practice in his career as a professional writer, so that parallel to his serious canon runs a series of coffee-table anthologies and picture-books. Financial pressures intensified once again in 1977, when, upon retiring from his eighteen-year editorship of Canadian Literature, Woodcock found himself pensionless and "eager to do the kind of writing that earns a bit of money."[4] By 1980 he had produced two books designed for that purpose: One Hundred Great Canadians and A Picture History of British Columbia. He was honest about his entrepreneurial intentions, referring to the former work as "a moneymaker of profiles and photographs of famous and notorious Canadians,"[5] and admitting that most of his over thirty radio plays had been potboilers.[6]

Since his arrival in Canada, then, Woodcock felt the need to write rapidly for public consumption; it is likely that this need caused his very rare lapses in grammar and in editing,[7] and his penchant for recycling parts of earlier writings in later publications.[8] Yet it is surprising that financial necessity had no more adverse effects, and certain that it was the mother of some of his finest inventions.[9] Potboiling was, indeed, an almost inevitable activity for an anarchist who distrusted state support of the arts, an autodidact who sought to escape the conventional trammels of academic inquiry, and a polemicist and popularizer who wished to address his works to the public at large. Always the "dedicated generalist," to use a phrase he applied to Aldous Huxley,[10] Woodcock remained the sort of man who, without expertise in these areas, would set out to try his hand at house-building and survival in the wilds of a country he knew only from his father's stories.

Meanwhile he faced not only economic hardship but also the problem of coming to terms emotionally and intellectually with his new home, ironically the land of his birth. He took up the challenge in a brief report on Canada that appeared in Freedom in July, 1949, stating the regional and puralist view of the country that would later constitute his version of Canadian culture and history:

> The first impression one receives of Canada is that the vastness of the country and the variety of conditions and cultures makes it extremely difficult to write about in any generalized way.... Across the continent, social conditions vary immensely. In French Canada and the Maritime provinces wages are low, the standard of living poor. It is not infrequent in these places for men to receive wages of twenty-five cents an hour or less. In British Columbia, on the other hand, ordinary labouring work is often paid at the rate of a dollar an hour.[11]

In the autumn of 1950 Woodcock and his wife travelled in Alberta, British Columbia, and Alaska. Describing these travels in Ravens and Prophets (1952), he measured the social conditions he encountered against his anarchist ideals. He was critical of company towns, finding that the smelting town of Trail, British Columbia embodied "the tendencies in contemporary society which inevitably weaken the freedom of individual development,"[12] while paper-producing Ocean Falls seemed too much like "the monstrous Utopian visions of the past, like Icaria, in which life is completely planned and unified."[13] Outraged at the forced assimilation of the Mennonites, he declared that "If diversity and character and oddity have any value in the world, as I'm sure they have, it is saddening to have witnessed them in such signal subjection to the forces of social unity."[14] He also lamented the foolish prejudices of their neighbours against the Doukhobors, the immigration and employment restrictions placed on the Chinese after they had helped to build the Canadian Pacific Railway, and the dispossession and mass deportation inland of the west-coast Japanese during the Second World War.[15]

Despite this application of his old ideals to his new homeland, and despite his Winnipeg birth, Ravens and Prophets contained none of the genuine local patriotism of Woodcock's later books on Canada. At this time Woodcock was an Englishman writing for an English readership, and holding a condescending view of the former colony in which he was stranded. He gave the English equivalents of Canadian prices, described Canada as "that country with fewer bookshops," explained that the Cumberland lakes would be small for Canada and that Hallowe'en was the Canadian version of the fifth of November, and used English words such as "auto-court" and "lorry" rather than the Canadian "motel" and "truck."[16] He found Vancouver "metropolitan in its disadvantages, provincial in its amenities," Victoria a "petty capital" with a "core of emptiness," and Calgary a "dull, flat, characterless, shapeless, sprawling western city."[17] These criticisms aroused such resentment that fifteen years later the Oxford Companion to Canadian History and Literature reported that some British Columbians had felt "that several of the author's observations were patronizing."[18]

After these disquieting travels redolent of Woodcock's state of cultural confusion, he spent much of the next few years outside Canada. In the summer of 1951 he used the income from a Guggenheim Fellowship to travel by bus from San Francisco to New York, then to France where he stayed until December, and then back to San Francisco until the following May. He returned to his wilderness retreat on Vancouver Island for a year, moving to Vancouver in the summer of 1953, and travelling in Mexico from September to December of that year.[19] In the resulting travelogue, To the City of the Dead (1957), he captured with poetic force the national myth of Mexico. This search for a unified impression of a country's landscape, people, art, religion, culture, and history was to become a prominent motif in later travelogues.

Woodcock found Mexico to be a land of harsh existential realities where extreme social inequality and Quixotic violence inspired cults of Revolution, danger, and death. This ethos, he observed, distanced the visitor from his normal values, so that many expatriates settled in the country "to eat the lotus seed and forget themselves forever."[20] The landscape itself effected a "ruthless stripping down of life to the bare bones of existence," inducing a troubled detachment:

> It begins with the landscape of the plateau, the endless hills worn down to arid skeletons, the plains dessicated into sandy wastes, the lakes dried into alkali flats, the vegetable forms almost geometrical in their starkness, so that the very flow of sap seems dried into a tortured angularity. A Mexican scene can be so severe that it takes on the neutral quality of an abstraction, and in such a setting one has a curious double feeling of having no organic link with one's surroundings and, at the same time, of being isolated by them from a more sympathetic world.[21]

This potent and lucid prose was accompanied by the skillful use of symbols to depict the "Two Nations" of foreign rich and native poor in Mexican society. He saw the physical predicament of Mexico City, its skyscrapers sinking about a foot each year into the silt-filled Aztec lake of Texcoco, as symbolic of its social stratification, its dominant European minority "resting insecurely, even after four centuries, upon the life of indigenous Mexico."[22] In an ancient square in Linares, the sight of two peasants solemly manipulating a toy spaceman seemed "a fitting symbol, if one were seeking symbols, of the divergent ways of living that come together in Mexico."[23]

Woodcock *was* seeking symbols, and relied also upon literary allusions to elucidate the Mexican obsession with death. "Mexicans see in death the intimacy of a friend and the majesty of a king," he remarked, "and I am sure John Webster and Cyril Tourneur would be much more at home with them than with the people of modern London."[24] He was appalled by a bullfight he witnessed in Celaya, commenting that the lyrical celebration of the bullfight by Hemingway and others was "a step back with Conrad's Kurtz into the
6 heart of darkness."[25] When being shown the mummies in the vaults below Guanajuato cemetery, Woodcock was, characteristically, aware of both the literary echoes and the social implications of an eerie moment:

> The saddest relic was that which still retained a tenuous suggestion of beauty. It was an inexplicably detached head - the head of a young woman - which lay on the floor at the entrance to the corridor. The long black hair framed a face which, though the eyes had fallen and the lips had receded to a tight snarl over the perfect teeth, still kept enough of the original features to make one realize that this was the final fragment of a handsome and lively mestiza who had died at the height of her youth. Poe would have written a whole romantic story, filled with Gothic fear and pathos, about such a relic, but the chances are that its owner lived a very ordinary life and died, as so many young people do in Mexico, in the sordid agonies of dysentery or typhoid.[26]

To the City of the Dead was an expression of

Woodcock's disbelief in a hierarchy of literary forms, for it displayed the literary graces of poetry and fiction. Yet the book was the work of an artist who was also a scholar, and therefore differed greatly from accounts which stressed artistic vision to the detriment of a scholarly grasp of social and historical fact. Aldous Huxley insisted, for example, that he "suddenly understood the how and why of the Spanish conquest" by observing a Spanish taxidermist at work for a few hours one afternoon: "The strength of the Indians is a strength of resistance, of passivity. Matched against these eager, violently active people from across the sea, they had no chance, no more chance than a rock against a sledge hammer."[27] Graham Greene's spiritual journey through what was, for him, the hell of Mexico (recounted in The Lawless Roads) was self-regarding, neglecting many aspects of Mexican life peripheral to his preoccupation with evil and his need for redemption.[28] The same overbalance on the side of artistic insight was apparent in D.H. Lawrence's exaltation of the Indian as a being without self-consciousness, a pagan worshipping without judging all the shapes, events, emotions, and creatures of the universe.[29]

In contrast, Woodcock maintained a well-balanced sensitivity to historical and social realities, advancing his anarchist's plea for the redress of glaring social inequalities. He noted that poverty denied medical care to most Indians, while lack of education led them to prefer the magical cures of the curandera to modern medical science.[30] Woodcock urged the government to revise its education programme, shifting its emphasis from literacy to the practical knowledge that would make the villagers' lives healthier and more abundant. He found this approach exemplified by the UNESCO Centre for Fundamental Education at Patzcuaro, which was helping villagers to preserve and control water supplies, to rebuild schools, and to construct new roads to main highways.[31] This concern with education and foreign aid suitable to local needs was to be a recurrent theme in Woodcock's books on other countries, and was a guiding principle of his Aid Society formed to help Tibetan refugees.

Similar social criticisms were expressed in Incas and Other Men (1959), Woodcock's account of travels in Peru between July and September of 1956. In Peru he found the same social structure as in Mexico, of rich foreigners dominating poor natives. The impoverished Indian workers, he discovered, lived in hovels and spent their scanty wages on food and clothing, chewing the mildly narcotic coca and occasionally getting drunk on chicha (the local beer) or raw spirits, and taking no interest in government which "from the days of Pizarro has represented the interests of the conquering aliens."[32] The Indians were despised overtly by the strongly prejudiced whites or mistis and the half-breeds or cholos.[33] Yet Woodcock found that their faith made the Peruvians less emotionally oppressed than the Mexican Indians:

> The kind of mortality cult which the Mexicans inherited from the death-oriented Spanish medieval culture and the death-obsessed society of the Aztecs has never existed in Peru, where the Incas developed a life-cult based on sun worship. And today, even if the Peruvian Indian shows all the signs of having been beaten in spirit by centuries of Spanish oppression, one never sees him as living, like his Mexican counterpart, in a tragic mental landscape peopled by bleeding, doomed Christs and the recurrent symbols of triumphant death.[34]

Meanwhile, out of Woodcock's scholarly interest in Mexican history grew one of the several radio plays that are important expressions of his anarchism. The Empire of Shadows, performed on CBC's Saturday Night on August 2, 1964, dramatized the short reign of the Hapsburgs in Mexico, from 1864 to 1867.[35] Offered the rule of Mexico by Napoleon III on the condition that he renounce all claims to the throne of the defeated Austria, Maximilian accepted, hoping to redeem the name of his illustrious family. In Mexico the inexperienced idealist released all political prisoners, and planned to end the Catholic Church's practice of appropriating the best lands and to improve the Indians' living conditions. The rebels, their ranks swelled by the freed prisoners and by American adventurers drifting south after the Civil War, forced Maximilian to renegue his enlightened promises. In February, 1866 he introduced conscription and the death penalty for rebels, at the insistence of the French commander, General Bazin, whose troops were withdrawn by Napoleon at the crucial moment. Maximilian revoked Bazin's punitive laws, but by May, 1867 his forces were routed and their leader executed. The Empress Carlotta, who had voyaged to France to persuade Napoleon not to withdraw his military support, had lost her sanity and been committed to an asylum.

Maximilian and Carlotta were, in Woodcock's portrayal, naive idealists who did not understand that despite their good intentions they were unwelcome imperialists who expected to rule in benevolent luxury over an abysmally poor country. They took up residence in the castle of Chapultepec, built on the site of the ancient Aztec palace of Moctezuma (a symbol of foreign tyranny very similar to Woodcock's description, in To the City of the Dead, of the European-dominated Mexico City built on the sinking soil of a filled-in Aztec lake). The play delivered an anarchist commentary on the tragic outcome of attempts to reform the political world of "hunter and hunted" from within existing structures of power, though the terrible innocence of Maximilian and Carlotta was, Woodcock implied, by far preferable to the premeditated crimes of "His Mephistophelian majesty," Napoleon.

By the time this play was performed, Woodcock had revised and clarified his view of anarchism, a process that began in the early fifties, when he was becoming accustomed to Canada and embarking on the first of his many travels, and culminated with the publication of Anarchism: A History of Libertarian Ideas and Movements in 1962. His criticisms of anarchist intolerance were expressed in a number of articles he wrote for Freedom in the fifties, some of which concerned the "Catholic Anarchist" controversy. It was Woodcock's view that the anarchist had no quarrel with Christian doctrine or those who professed it, but only with organizations which sought "to institutionalise religion into disciplined patterns of thought and action, and hence to establish a spiritual, intellectual, and even a physical hierarchy."[36] He felt that individual Catholics might be very good anarchists, and chided Freedom for its intolerant attacks on the leftist magazine, The Catholic Worker:

> I cannot help feeling that, instead of sniping at the Catholic Worker as Freedom very undignifiedly did a couple of years back, it would be best if anarchists were to realise that one of the reasons for the comeback of the church is that everywhere there are Catholic priests and laymen getting on with mutual aid jobs, and doing all the things which Anarchists should be doing.[37]

Woodcock regretted that "when the question of religion comes up, the inverted piety of some writers in Freedom leads them to depart from logic in the direction of emotional irritability," and prayed to be saved from bigots "whether they march under a black cassock or a black flag."[38]

The turning point came in a 1956 article for Freedom in which Woodcock announced that "in recent years I have become something of a political agnostic, and my position is similar to that of the religious agnostic who accepts the Christian ethic but doubts whether it has much to do with the Churches that call themselves Christian."[39] While he still believed in anarchism as "an enduring distrust of government and a corresponding desire to achieve the utmost possible freedom," he argued that anarchist movements had, "by their mutual intolerances, their yearnings for mass followings, and their tendencies to harden the visionary future into Utopian forms, done more harm than good to the pursuit of freedom."[40] Abandoning the "revolutionary illusion" and the hope of creating a unitary libertarian society, he proposed that anarchists should strive to nurture greater freedoms within existing society. Describing the path he would follow in the future, Woodcock implored anarchists to "re-examine, rigorously and incessantly, the ideas which have been associated with the libertarian tradition," and to persist in their work of "radical and searching social criticism."[41]

The first aspect of anarchist thought to which he turned his critical eye was the question of Utopias. When Marie Louise Berneri's Journey Through Utopia appeared in 1950, a year after her sudden death at the age of thirty-one, the book contained a Foreword by Woodcock. He agreed with Berneri's view that most fictional Utopias had been authoritarian, seeking "the happiness of mankind through material well-being, the sinking of man's individuality into the group, and the greatness of the state."[42] These scientific tyrannies had been replaced by anti-Utopian visions after 1914, he observed, when the dangers of collectivism in Russia and of fascism in Italy, Spain, and Germany lent credibility to anti-Utopian arguments.[43] He warned, moreover, that those dangers were still present in 1950: "The Utopias of the past are taking shape around us, and we realize at last that the most delightful-sounding of these schemes must of necessity become a gruesome prison unless it is based firmly and securely upon the foundation of individual freedom."[44]

Woodcock pursued the subject in later writings. Reviewing Richard Gerber's Utopian Phantasy in 1956 he objected to the writers of Utopian fiction being treated together with those of science fiction or futurist fantasy, but admitted that both groups sought "to escape from the unpredictable urges of the man within, the Utopians by caging him within a rigid social framework and the fantasists by flying to some strange and remote future where man will be angelic rather than human."[45] In Anarchism (1962) he noted that most anarchists reject the notion that history will culminate in social and personal perfection. Even Godwin qualified his rash claims for the perfectability of man by protesting that he did not mean that men could be made perfect, but that they were capable of indefinite improvement.[46] As an anarchist who affirmed the universal law of Heraclitean flux, Woodcock eschewed the notion that the historical process could be halted. In some 1973 radio talks on Utopias he asserted that the idea of social perfection was ahistorical, stipulating the end of human development.[47]

For this reason he decried those "smug visions of a socialist paradise enjoyed before 1914," such as Edward Bellamy's Looking Backward (1888).[48] In Bellamy's ideal society of the year 2,000 the state had been made the sole employer, crime eradicated by the abolition of property, freedom of speech and artistic expression guaranteed, education improved and leisure increased vastly over Victorian society, and happiness instituted by an amassment of consumer goods and public amenities. Work in the industrial army was, however, joylessly regimented; those who contravened its discipline were punished severely, and there was no possibility of conscientious objection, for, as one of the characters explained, the citizen who refused service in the army "would have excluded himself from the world, cut himself off from his kind, in a word, committed suicide."[49]

William Morris's News from Nowhere (1890), the one Utopian vision of which Woodcock and Berneri approved, was written in answer to Bellamy's book. "A machine life," wrote Morris in 1889, "is the best which Bellamy can imagine for us on all sides; it is not to be wondered at then that his only idea of making labour tolerable is to decrease the amount of it by fresh and ever fresh developments of machinery."[50] Woodcock found in News from Nowhere a vision "of the kind of world that might appear if the anarchist dreams of building harmony on the ruins of authority had a chance to come true."[51] He pointed out that Morris "came remarkably near to Kropotkin in his ideas,"[52] and it is indeed a simple matter to identify Morris's independent towns as simulacra of the medieval city-states idealized by Kropotkin. In Morris's ideal communities, artistic skill suffused the creation of ordinary articles, such as clothing and furniture. The "trim and clean, orderly and bright" architecture, and the "force and directness" of the friezes and carvings resembled those described in Ruskin's famous essay, "The Nature of Gothic."[53] Paradoxically, the common belief in humanism had implications very similar to those of medieval Christianity, as one of the characters commented:

> More akin to our way of looking at life was the spirit of the Middle Ages, to whom [sic] heaven and the life of the next world had such a reality that it became to them a part of life upon the earth; which accordingly they loved and adorned, in spite of the ascetic doctrines of their formal creed, which bade them contemn it.[54]

The medieval character of Morris's Utopian society was a strong contrast to the nineteenth century's apotheosis of science, and its belief in the scientific mastery of man over nature.[55] Clara, one of Morris's characters, suggested that, because they felt that "nature was something outside them," the people of the nineteenth century had sought to conquer nature and to repress their own natural instincts.[56] Morris did not separate society as subject from nature and natural human desires as object; at the core of News from Nowhere was Kropotkin's theory that man had an instinct of sociability or mutual aid, yet Morris did recognize that man's natural impulses were sometimes socially disruptive. His view of man's proper relation to nature was stated by his character, Old Hammond, who commented that "we pass our lives in reasonable strife with nature."[57] This strife emerged in crimes of passion caused by man's ineradicable appetitive nature. Since Morris's ideal society had no laws of marriage or divorce to legislate the passions, nor any punishment to deter crime, the guilty individual was sent into temporary exile until he had conquered his remorse.

Woodcock agreed with Morris that in such cases moral coercion would be necessary and acceptable. Though he argued that "the man who has experienced the real change of heart, who has conquered desire and disciplined the ego, will not wish to apply even moral coercion," he admitted that a society composed of such men was a remote possibility.[58] "The stress which anarchists have placed on the power of public opinion in disciplining the anti-social individual suggests," he observed, "that none of them would object to Morris's idea of the common good being protected by 'social customs growing up from the experience of society'."[59] Made in 1962, this judgement showed how much Woodcock's view of anarchism had changed since 1947 when he had replied to Orwell's argument that the pacifist vision of society entailed the tyranny of public opinion by insisting dogmatically that "anarchists have consistently attacked the idea of imposing the will of the majority."[60]

News from Nowhere was a dream of what Morris would have liked society to be, rather than a scientific plan for social perfection. The events of the novel, Woodcock noted with approbation, took place "not in the harsh white light of perfection... but in the mellow stillness of a long summer afternoon."[61] This view of the Utopian vision as a personal ideal was exactly that of Plato in his "no-place," as Socrates explained in The Republic, the first of all fictional Utopias:

> "You speak of the city which has its being in words, for there is no spot on earth, I imagine, where it exists."
>
> "No," I said; "but perhaps it is laid up in heaven as a pattern for him who wills to see, and seeing, to found a city in himself. Whether it exists anywhere or ever will exist, is no matter."[62]

In contrast, the Marxist approach to Utopias denied the imaginative and speculative qualities of Utopian dreams. In Socialism, Utopian and Scientific (1892) Engels dismissed as "unscientific" the Utopias of Saint-Simon, Fourrier, and Owen, asserting that the more completely their social plans were worked out in detail, "the more they could not avoid drifting into pure fantasies."[63] The only valuable Utopian visions, he judged, were those offering practical plans for social change and grounded in Marxist theory, recognizing the inevitability of class struggle and revolution. Engels' distinction between vague Utopian and rigorous scientific thinking was factitious, however, in that the culmination of his own social vision, the final withering away of the state, was no more realistic than any anarchist dream, as shown by his description of how this was to occur:

> State interference in social relations becomes, in one domain after another, superfluous, and then dies out by itself; the government of persons is replaced by the administration of things, and by the conduct of the processes of production. The state is not "abolished." It dies out.[64]

Woodcock was more consistent in distinguishing between dreaming and planning. He warned that Utopian dreams should never be misconstrued as social plans to be wrenched whole from dreamland into reality "as the Communists so tragically attempted to do in Russia and

China."[65] At the same time, Woodcock became impatient with whimsical anarchist visions of an idyllic past or future, declaring that "their ruthless criticism of the present has always been the great strength of the anarchists."[66] Echoing his earlier comments about his stay at Middleton Murry's commune at Langham in 1941, he argued that Utopian communities should be established not solely for themselves but for some ulterior practical purpose. Parallel to his 1956 statement that anarchist ideals would serve best to inspire piecemeal social change, he envisioned a number of para-Utopian groups of this kind growing up within an increasingly pluralist society:

> Utopia as a unitary state that embraces all men is negative and destructive, but may we not conceive the eventual evolution of a much more organic form of society in which the para-Utopia, the community with some special purpose for existence, will form a natural unit co-operating with other units in a decentralized and mutable social pattern?[67]

While Woodcock's view of Utopias was changing during the fifties, he wrote two radio plays about the cultural baggage carried by Utopian adventurers, showing that attempts to create an ideal society were often imperilled by the pernicious attitudes the builders transported from their own unjust societies. El Dorado, the first of Woodcock's radio dramas, performed on CBC's Opening Night on March 9, 1951, elucidated the anarchistic themes of

CANADIAN THESES 67454 THESES CANADIENNES	AUTHOR/AUTEUR ROBINSON, J. GEORGE WOODCOCK: ROMANTIC...	ISBN 0-315-19546-0

Voltaire's Candide. Amazed to find in the Utopian kingdom of El Dorado "no terrifying symbols of the law,/ No uniforms, no instruments of killing," the naive hero addressed the king about his country's shortcomings:

> In one respect your city seems to fail.
> Where are the law courts and your city jail?
> For nothing more denotes a happy nation
> Than hanging judges and incarceration.[68]

In mock-heroic couplets Woodcock attacked the greed and stubbornness that spoiled the lives of Candide and Cacambo in El Dorado. Following the spirit of Voltaire's original social satire, he implied that human character, debased by centuries of social corruption, might be reformed if social conditions could be changed.

The same theme was conveyed in Island of Demons (1960), an account of how "civilized" attitudes poisoned a wilderness Utopia.[69] Setting out in 1542 to conquer the godless Indians of New France, the Sieur de Roberval brought with him his niece, Marguerite, hoping to separate her from her lower-class lover. The young man followed disguised as one of the crew, and suggested to Margeurite that they avoid the censure of French society by escaping to the North American wilderness. When Roberval discovered the plot, he punished the lovers by granting their wish; they were deposited on the Island of Demons, notorious in Indian legend, carrying in their hands an

Indian stone bird "nestled like a token of Eden."

Ironically, the only demons on the island were those of the lovers' own cultural prejudices. At the moment when Marguerite was troubled by conventional religious doubt about her love being "unblessed," the demons of Doubt, Discord, and Regret were called forth (exhibiting the dress and banter of modern salesmen). Her lover, Michael de Sansterre ("without land"), driven by the pioneer's compulsion to assert his dominance over the land, killed more game than was needed. When Marguerite called him bloodthirsty he ran off angrily into the woods, and was killed by a bear. Some months later, in a repetitive action suitable to the play's macabre comedy, Marguerite insulted the piety of her maid, Marie, who fled into the night and was devoured by wolves.

Keeping her vigil for a rescuing ship, Marguerite conquered her demons, forgiving Roberval his aristocratic pride and lust for conquest, de Sansterre his mad desire to possess his own land, and herself for her narrow piety and her ill-considered outrage at the same quality in Marie. The story of her painful growth of awareness presented Woodcock's criticism of destructive social attitudes, and his warning that a change of heart must precede social melioration. He acknowledged, moreover, that this inner revolution is always encumbered by the terrible weight of social conditioning.

Another enormous impediment to social change, Woodcock recognized, was extreme individualism. With cautious ambivalence, he accorded individualism a prominent place in anarchist thought while voicing scathing criticisms of its more irascible and myopic spokesmen. In Anarchism, he noted that individualism made anarchism, which upheld the sovereignty of the person, different from democratic government by the people. Anarchists, he explained, have insisted that the individual not resign his sovereignty to a parliamentary representative; far from being akin to democracy, anarchism was more like "aristocracy universalized and purified," for while aristocracy was based on the freedom of noblemen, anarchists have exalted "the nobility of free/men."[70] Woodcock was sceptical, however, about whether any society could accommodate such individualism, concluding that in the economic field it could "only be applied logically in some wholly mythical hypothesis, like Rousseau's conception of the primordial man living his solitary existence devoid of any social tie."[71]

Appalled by the irresponsibly incendiary statements of some intractable individualists, Woodcock made every effort to brush aside this detritus of anarchist theory. In his sardonic portrait of "The Egoist," Max Stirner, he abandoned his usual reluctance to compromise his subjects' ideas with biographical evidence. "The contrast between Stirner's timid apathetic life and his aggressive great work" (The Ego and His Own, 1843) provided, he noted, "a classic example of the power of literature as compensatory daydream."[72] Stirner proclaimed that the self-realized individual could not be restrained by social morality; spurning the idea of the planned revolution, he glorified crime as the ultimate self-assertion. Nietzsche hailed Stirner as one of the seminal minds of the nineteenth century, and, by his own cult of unlimited will, prepared the way for Stirner's brief popularity during the Edwardian era.

For Woodcock, Stirner's recalcitrant egoism, which involved no modicum of mutual aid, had no place in human society.[73] He mused that "If the world of Stirnerite egoists, that free intercourse of unique beings each embattled in his power, could ever be achieved in real life, it might take on a shape rather similar to the underground Utopia which Bulwyer Lytton describes in The Coming Race, where every individual possesses power in the form of the deadly energy called vril."[74] This substance made the citizens of Lytton's Utopia the epigones of Sir Francis Bacon's Masters of Nature, for it could rend through rock, light lamps, kill or envigorate, and, if activated by a specially evolved nerve in each person's hand, could annihilate all life on earth in an instant. This threat had rendered war, government by force, and all forms of coercion obsolete, making mutual respect and brotherhood universal realities; the right ends had been attained by the wrong means.

Woodcock also had reservations about Bakunin's individualism, though he appreciated the stormy Russian's strength of character as it emerged during his power struggle with Marx in the First International. When in 1867 Marx peremptorily rejected Bakunin's proposal that a Swiss radical group he had joined be amalgamated with the International, Bakunin was expelled from the group, and proceeded to organize his own supporters in Spain and Italy where the International had never secured a following. With this support, Bakunin dominated the Basel Conference of the International in 1869, where a resolution drafted by Marx was defeated by a large majority. Marx and Engels then managed to have Bakunin excluded from the Hague Conference in 1872, and, fearing that the secret Bakuninist alliance might yet challenge their control, scuttled the International by moving its headquarters to the United States, making it accessible only by an expensive voyage: "in New York the General Council languished and quickly died from sheer inaction."[75]

In describing the Basel Conference, Woodcock criticized both Marx and Bakunin, though he found the latter by far the more admirable:

> The two men were as different in character as in ideas. Marx, the bitter, dictatorial scholar, with a great power of social analysis that had been submerged in a messianic conception of history; Bakunin, the hero of insurrections and prisons, the generous and able orator, extravagant in his enthusiasm, too impatient to be a systematic thinker,

> but possessed of a remarkable clairvoyance that enabled him to see with remarkable accuracy the defects of his opponents and their teachings.[76]

Other historians have shared this unflattering view of Marx. E.H. Carr recorded that Marx stuffed the Hague Conference with his supporters and used dishonest means to have Bakunin ousted from the International.[77] Isaiah Berlin noted Marx's admission that he judged the merit of all socialist assemblies solely by the extent to which he could control them,[78] and supported Woodcock's view that Bakunin excelled Marx in oratory and personal appeal.[79] While both Carr and Berlin acknowledged Marx's unscrupulous hunger for power, they agreed with Marx's judgement that no political organization could have contained Bakunin's chaotic temperament.[80]

Woodcock also observed that Bakunin's behaviour "often made him appear to be the caricature rather than the example of an anarchist."[81] He was gigantic in physical stature, and ate, drank, and smoked voraciously, living in a round of frenetic activity that kept him too harried ever to complete any books. Woodcock lamented Bakunin's destructive urge: his celebration of revolution as a social catharsis and a personal liberation, or as a kind of Holy War in which the world was to be purged of evil.[82] This naive belief caused the old revolutionary fighter to fall under the malign spell of his young nihilist alter-ego, Nechaev.

Their ambiguous relationship was explored in Woodcock's only radio drama about an episode in anarchist history. The Lion and the Tiger Cub (1977) used what he called "that hybrid form of reportage-documentary with dramatic aspects which writers developed during the thirties,"[83] interspersing narrative commentary, dialogue, and testimonials from peripheral characters. First the narrator outlined the lives of the two men prior to their meeting. Bakunin had fought on the barricades in Paris in 1848, and in Prague and Dresden, hoping for a Pan-Slavic revolution. He had survived scurvy when imprisoned in the infamous St. Peter and St. Paul fortress, and escaped from a work camp in Siberia to arrive in London in 1861. Nechaev had begun work in a textile factory at the age of nine, and at nineteen became a scriptures lecturer and student in St. Petersburg. In 1869 he and five others composed a bloodthirsty "Revolutionary Catechism." He was interrogated and released by the Third Division, and fled to Geneva, where he told Bakunin that he represented an immense organization of Russian student radicals.

Under Nechaev's influence, Bakunin signed several venomous pamphlets advocating revolution in Russia, and arranged financing for the young terrorist's clandestine return to his homeland. At the Agricultural Academy in Petrovskoe Nechaev gathered forty followers whom he called "The People's Vengeance." When one of them disagreed with his views, Nechaev shot him. He then returned to Geneva where Bakunin at first accepted Nechaev's statements that the murder of Ivan Ivanov had been the liquidation of a dangerous informer, but gradually discovered the truth. Though Bakunin helped Nechaev to escape to England, this last gesture of friendship was repaid by the theft of his confidential documents and attempted blackmail. Foolishly, Nechaev turned up in Zurich in 1872; he was betrayed, arrested, and sentenced by a Moscow court to twenty years' hard labour. Eight years later, he managed, amazingly, to win over the guards of the Alexis Ravelin of the St. Peter and St. Paul to carry papers to the revolutionary cell called the Narodnaya Volya or People's Will, urging them to assassinate the Tsar before attempting his own escape. On December 21, 1882 he died of scurvy and starvation.

In this didactic play, Woodcock portrayed Bakunin as the champion of a truly moral anarchism who was, despite his better judgement, suborned by the destructive fervour of his doppelgänger. Opposing Nechaev's assertions that the revolution must destroy the sentimental values of the bourgeoisie, Bakunin argued that the revolution would, on the contrary, make the world safe for the fulfillment of honour, love, and friendship. His warning to Nechaev that "you will end up creating your own Third Division" voiced Woodcock's belief that corrupt means would subvert revolutionary ends. While he recognized Nechaev's courage, and the influence of his harsh life upon his misanthropy, he denounced the young zealot's amoral vision of destruction and its historical legacy: "Where political creeds are corrupted by violence, where ends are destroyed by means, where destruction is elevated above rebirth, where liberators become executioners, and where the pursuit of utmost freedom is consummated in the achievement of utmost tyranny, that is where Nechaev survives."[84]

The dreary permutations of Nechaev's nihilism, and the terrorist activities of other individuals and groups of the 1880's and 1890's did little to correct blatant social injustices, Woodcock felt, while they "surrounded anarchism with an aura of brutality, foreign to the basic humanity of its philosophy."[85] This superficial image of anarchism as a cult of violence was linked closely to the misconception that it lacked a spiritual dimension. D.S. Savage, Woodcock's old friend of the forties, argued that anarchism failed to pass the acid test of spiritual rectitude because it condoned murder and ignored the more Christian revolutionary method of passive resistance.[86] Writing in a fest-schrift dedicated to Woodcock, Savage showed an astonishing ignorance of Woodcock's writings on anarchists such as Gandhi and Tolstoy, who exalted a heightened spiritual awareness as a necessary prelude to a better social order, and practiced the Christian doctrine of non-resistance of evil.[87]

Savage made the fundamental error of considering anarchism a purely secular doctrine, assuming that its originator, Godwin, imparted to the philosophy only the

Enlightenment values of logic, reason, and optimism. He did not take into account Woodcock's arguments that Godwin's principles of Reason and Necessity were, in fact, religious immanences of truth and justice, and therefore similar to Spinoza's pantheistic God.[88] Nor did Savage acknowledge Woodcock's testimony that Godwin's faith had changed, in his last work, into an affirmation of social change through the New Testament virtues of self-denial, brotherhood, and the individual change of heart. His The Genius of Christianity Unveiled, completed in 1833 but withheld from publication for fifty years by Mary Shelley out of a fear that it would incite further acrimony against the forsaken prophet of revolution, looked forward to the beliefs of later anarchists. Woodcock has shown that Tolstoy's faith in the Christ-like nature of every man was really Godwin's ultimate form of Christianity with its supernatural aspects stripped away.[89]

He has asserted, moreover, that although the anarchist movement commenced with Godwin, the idea, under various forms and names, was alive more than two centuries before the movement began.[90] Woodcock found the roots of anarchism in the bizarre millennarial cults and sects of medieval England, and in the seventeenth century Diggers, a sect formed in reaction to the social and economic hardships of the Civil War. In 1648 their leader, George Winstanley, published his pamphlet, Truth Lifting up its

Head above Scandals, in which he anticipated Godwin by considering Reason to be "the Kingdom of God within Man." Following the anarchist method of direct action, the Diggers tried for two years to establish an ideal community by sowing some wasteland to crops, but the settlement failed and by 1650 the group had disbanded.[91]

Woodcock's own religious attitude was described best in Herbert Read's statement that "religion is the life of contemplation, the fruit of pure contemplation, spiritual joy."[92] Throughout his career Woodcock celebrated individual spiritual insight while attacking Churches as oppressive institutions. In 1942 he declared that all organized religions were "systems of ruling class mythology"[93] (a view expressed also in such early poems as "Gods" and "The Hero"), and in 1971 admitted that he could see "no function in organized worship beyond the assertion of human fellowship."[94] His non-denominational faith has comprised scholarly interests in mysticism, Mahayanist Buddhism, and the contemplative philosophy of Taoism, which he distinguished from mysticism because its goal was an attunement with nature rather than the worship of transcendental entities.[95]

Taoism's confluence of the immanent faith of nature cults and apolitical doctrine began to interest Woodcock as early as 1942, when he noted that the Taoist way of "production without possession, action without assertion, and development without domination" was identical in its broad application to the way of anarchy.[96] In 1950 he recorded Oscar Wilde's interest in Chuang-Tzu, the Taoist who condemned government, capital, property, and conventional morality, exalting non-action and "natural morality" as the marks of the perfect man.[97] Woodcock later found that Thomas Merton too was enchanted by Chuang-Tzu's vision of a world where, in Merton's words, "all beings should live without interference according to thier natures."[98]

In his 1978 biography, Woodcock showed that Merton, a pacifist monk of the Franciscan order, was inspired by the social awareness of Pope John's Vatican II (1958-63) to propound a number of anarchist beliefs. Hoping that the medieval hegemony of religions would end in a new diaspora, Merton envisioned a society in which the Christ-like nature of each individual would be respected, in which work would be morally and spiritually fulfilling, and in which happiness would be valued more than material and political aggrandizement.[99] It was, Woodcock observed, "rather like the visions of modest and austere societies based on mutual aid and mutual trust that were imagined by such peaceful anarchists as William Godwin and Peter Kropotkin and Gerard Winstanley."[100]

The greatest modern exponent of a conjunction between religion and anarchism was, without question, Mohandas Gandhi. For Woodcock as a young leftist in 1930, Gandhi had been "the personification not only of the rejection of empire but of a new concept of revolution."[101] When, four long trips to India and forty years later, he came to write his intellectual biography of the spiritual and political leader, he found at the heart of Gandhi's thought the belief that "the attainment of political freedom would become a reality only through self-purification."[102] According to Woodcock, Gandhi called himself an anarchist more than once,[103] and fought for _Swaraj_ or self-government where each village would be a little republic, economically self-sufficient and politically autonomous, with the state constituting no more than a co-ordinating mechanism in a decentralized society.[104]

Beginning in 1934 Gandhi had tried to broaden the economic basis of village life by encouraging weaving and other crafts, and by settling in the remote village of Seagoon (renamed Sevagram, the Village of Service), where he reformed agriculture and created small industries. The efficacy of this programme impressed Woodcock when in 1961 he visited some of the 1,500 out of 700,000 villages that had adopted Gandhian methods.[105] Woodcock understood, however, that decentralized and labour-intensive industries would be most appropriate in developing countries, advising that isolated communities of workers and artisans would have little hope of evading the corrupting influences of surrounding capitalist society.[106] Kropotkin's dream of a return to a society of medieval communes, so movingly depicted in _News From Nowhere_ was, he admitted, no longer possible.[107]

Despite these practical criticisms of decentralism, Woodcock remained loyal to the ideal and its moral corollaries of asceticism, rural self-sufficiency, and the integration of manual and intellectual work.[108] In The Conquest of Bread (1906) Kropotkin had argued that the "division of labour" of capitalist industry rendered work meaningless, favouring small localized workshops over large factories. Like Marx, Kropotkin realized that capitalism created an unnatural barrier between intellectual and manual work; instead, he proposed an "integration of capabilities" that would be inculcated through education and enacted in working life.[109] It was this principle that Woodcock sought to implement when he lived for two years on Vancouver Island as house builder, ditch digger, market gardener, and writer.

Decentralism was related to the perennial problem of food supply. Hobbes had based his hypothesis of a constant "war of all against all" in primitive societies on the assumption that the supply of food was never adequate, and Malthus and Darwin had accepted this premise. The Scarcity Assumption served well to vindicate the capitalist ethos of ruthless competition and greed, as Philip Slater has commented.[110] In The Conquest of Bread Kropotkin addressed the problem, claiming that English agriculture of the 1870's could have fed the country if methods of cultivation were improved, importing restricted, and some means of international co-operation achieved in the production and distribution of foods.[111] Woodcock's pamphlet, New Life to the Land (1942) followed these arguments in supporting greater agricultural self-sufficiency for England.[112]

Just as Woodcock's commitment to decentralism became more idealistic than practical, so did his view of anarchism in general. He concluded that anarchism had failed as a movement because of the refusal of anarchists to make social plans, which meant that their dreams constituted only "a vague and vapid illusion of an idyllic society."[113] The few practical successes of anarchist communities in the twentieth century had been so ephemeral, he admitted, as to offer no suggestions about how a fully-developed anarchist society could endure.[114] Finally, Woodcock abandoned the hope of a new society emerging from a revolutionary cataclysm, favouring practical experiments within existing society. These would thrive, he cautioned, only if libertarians made their proposals for reform "relevant to our concrete and rapidly changing present and not to some idealized future."[115] He admonished anarchists not to neglect their most valuable function of social criticism, insisting that "our aim should be to preserve as much freedom for men as they are."[116] Yet his self-critical depredations on his own beliefs left essentially untouched his idealistic ~~faith~~ in anarchism as a humane and moral philosophy:

> The great anarchists call on us to stand on our own moral feet like a generation of princes, to become aware of justice as an inner fire, and to learn that the still, small voices of our own hearts speak more truly than the choruses of propaganda that daily assault our outer ears.... In this insistence that freedom and moral self-realization are interdependent, and one cannot live without the other, lies the ultimate lesson of true anarchism.[117]

The gradual maturation of this view of anarchism was reflected in Woodcock's three intellectual biographies of the fifties; in these works the anarchist bias was ever-present, though it became more cogently reasoned as his scepticism about anarchist thinkers increased. Like his earlier study of Aphra Behn, his 1950 portrait of Oscar Wilde was an unsatisfactory attempt to dress a complex figure in the constricting guise of the anarchist underdog. Wilde was really an anarchist Individualist, Woodcock claimed, whose struggle to achieve the freedom his nature required within the rigid morality of Victorian society informed his paradoxical roles of aesthetic clown and serious creative critic, pagan and Christian, dissolute hedonist and chastened prophet of suffering and redemption.

There was some truth in this view, for "The Soul of Man under Socialism" was certainly an anarchist tract. "All forms of government are failures" Wilde declared in his aphoristic style, adding that "It is only in voluntary associations that man is fine."[118] Refusing to make practical social plans based upon existing conditions, he voiced the naive anarchist hope that those conditions would be done away with, and human nature would change.[119] Wilde upheld the anarchist principles of asceticism, the control of technology for moral purposes, and the individual's right to discover and to express his own virtues.[120] Repulsed by sickly and hideous cant about duty and self-sacrifice, which he called "savage mutilation," Wilde maintained that true morality "comes naturally and inevitably out of man."[121] He decried the use of great works of art as bludgeons to beat down the expression of beauty in new forms, asserting that the worship of artistic icons epitomized "the natural inability of a community corrupted by authority to understand or appreciate Individualism."[122]

These ideas were not related to Wilde's character, however, because of Woodcock's belief in the autonomy of ideas. Carrying the anarchist banner, he did not ask if Wilde's vaunted Individualism was not a theoretical expression of a self-destructive egoism, or whether his Christian emphasis on suffering might not have been a mere dramatization of Wilde's misery after his trial and imprisonment. Woodcock's only comment on the drunkenness and sexual profligacy of Wilde's final years in Paris was that these indulgences were "irrelevant to the fact that he did maintain much of what he had gained in inward grace."[123] Here Woodcock was forced to distort biographical evidence to conform to his inadequate theory that Wilde the rugged Individualist had journeyed from his tempestuous youth to the halcyon days of "inward grace," having lived through the Christian pattern of sin and suffering followed by redemption.

On the contrary, Hesketh Pearson argued that Wilde played the role of the lonely and forlorn destitute in his last years.[124] Pearson pointed out that Wilde was always the poseur, who embraced ideas as accoutrements to the drama of his life, like masks held up to the actor's face. De Profundis, Pearson felt, lacked a tone of conviction because Wilde's conversion was no more profound than his earlier dabblings in Christian liturgy and ritual; the book was merely Wilde's "temporary reaction to circumstances, his admission that life had wounded him."[125] While Woodcock complained that other writers had portrayed Wilde as "a black sinner or a misunderstood saint, as a weak-willed half-wit or a 'Lord of Language',"[126] he praised Pearson for demolishing "many of the legends that have made Wilde appear a more trivial and foolish character than he really was."[127] If he had accorded prominence to Pearson's central theme that Wilde had an impressionist's interest in ideas, adopting them because they made strong impressions and suited the dramatic ambience of the moment, Woodcock's treatment of Wilde's ideas would have been more judiciously balanced. As it was, he overlaid previous legends with his own reductive myth of the anarchist Individualist who lived bravely against the grain of his society.

In The Anarchist Prince (1950), co-written with Ivan Avakumovic, this tone of advocacy for the anarchist cause was far more apposite. One could hardly dispute the argument that Kropotkin's life was one of great devotion to the cause of social change. Born into an aristocratic family, he was singled out by the Tsar to join the select Corps of Pages, where he earned top honours, and, though vouchsafed an illustrious career in the Guards, he yearned for broader horizons, accepting an officer's position in an obscure Cossack regiment. In Siberia and central Asia he became an excellent geographer, but refused the position of Secretary of the Russian Geographical Society, for he had acquired a sympathy with the peasants encountered in his travels, and a desire to work to change their lives. His growing radicalism took him to Switzerland in 1872 and he became an anarchist; returning to work among the poor of Russia, he was twice imprisoned but escaped to live his last thirty years, from 1886 to 1917, in exile in England.

Also irrefutable was Woodcock's view that during this last phase of his life Kropotkin's benign presence did much to enhance the public image of anarchism. Although William Morris misconstrued anarchism as merely uninhibited individualism, he had nothing but respect for Kropotkin.[128] M.M. Hyndman, the prominent Marxist leader, declared after several years of theoretical quarrels with Kropotkin, that

"In my whole life I have never met a personality whom I admired more than he."[129] George Bernard Shaw differed constantly with Kropotkin throughout their long acquaintance, but thought him "amiable to the point of saintliness."[130] Romain Rolland judged that Kropotkin had "realised in his own life the ideal of moral purity, or serene abnegation, of perfect love of humanity."[131]

This depiction of the "sweet reasonableness" of the anarchist prince was balanced by several perceptive criticisms. Woodcock denounced Kropotkin's tendency to see social progress in nationalist terms, a view which led to the delusion that the Russian state would enact revolutionary changes if the First World War were won. In blind obstinacy, Kropotkin urged the Russian soldiers to continue fighting when they wanted only "peace and bread."[132] When he spoke to the Constituent Assembly in 1917 Kropotkin made the even more serious error, Woodcock estimated, of supporting Lloyd Georgeian socialist reforms and a republican government similar to that of the United States: "It was a classic example of the danger of compromise, and it was used by the Bolsheviks to rob Kropotkin of much of the devotion that still existed towards him."[133] Only later, when the Soviets had come under a party dictatorship, did Kropotkin concede that the Revolution had failed.

Woodcock was also critical of Kropotkin's most important scientific theory. In Mutual Aid (1902) Kropotkin agreed with Darwin that the struggle for existence was central to evolution, but argued that it went on mainly between species and between individuals and the environment, whereas within each species co-operation rather than competition was the guiding principle of behaviour. Woodcock observed quite correctly that much of modern biology and sociology would support this theory,[134] but noted that Kropotkin's judgements were often sweeping or hasty, and that his scientific knowledge had many unfortunate gaps.[135] While Kropotkin's scientific writings had vitality and clarity, he acknowledged, they were marred by "a tendency to simplify complex issues and to generalise where particular analyses might have been more appropriate."[136] There was, moreover, an implicit criticism of mutual aid in Woodcock's well-reasoned conclusion that Kropotkin's greatest achievement was not his scientific theory but his saintly character, which convinced people that anarchism was not a creed of class violence and destruction but an idealistic philosophy of social change.[137]

Polemical intentions were also balanced by sound argument and criticism in Woodcock's study of Proudhon (1956). He endorsed Proudhon's emphasis on social cohesion and denial of extreme individualism, his concern with education as the means of elevating social ideals, and his hopes for a better spiritual life for mankind - one that would transcend dogma and Church oppression.[138] Woodcock also demonstrated that Proudhon's rebellious nature, his regionalism, and his sense of the centrality of manual labour in social life could be understood only by placing him in the context of peasant radicalism.[139]

Yet Woodcock was rigorously critical, lamenting that, while Proudhon was strong on the attack against authoritarian attitudes, his practical alternatives were either barely sketched or lost in paradoxical rhetoric.[140] The French anarchist's notion that the revolution would issue in a stable society of contractual adjustments was inspired, Woodcock complained, by "a certain naive optimism, a tendency to see reason as over-powerful, and a faith in man's propensity to detect and choose his own good which is not entirely borne out by experience."[141] The book contained several comments on Proudhon's pomposity, abruptness, stubbornness, and impetuosity.[142]

The most compelling aspect of this biography was, however, Woodcock's chronicle of the clashes between Marx and Proudhon, describing clearly their different debts to Hegel. Marx hailed Proudhon's pamphlet What is Property? (1842) as "the first decisive, vigorous, and scientific examination" of property as the basis of political economy,[143] and after their all-night debates in Paris in the winter of 1844-45, Marx claimed to have "infected" Proudhon with Hegelianism.[144] Hegel's dialectical view of history appealed to Marx because it represented a gradual progression toward perfection, but he was repelled by Hegel's idealism:

> My own dialectic method is not only different from the Hegelian, but is its direct opposite. For Hegel.... the thinking process is the demiurge of the real world, and the real world is only the outward manifestation of "the Idea." With me, on the other hand, the idea is nothing else than the material world reflected by the human mind and translated into the terms of thought.[145]

As Engels estimated, the foundation of Marx's political theory was the belief that all religious ideas, legal conceptions, artistic theories, and public morals are determined by the economic substructure of society.[146]

In contrast, Proudhon had embraced Hegelian idealism before his meetings with Marx, as Woodcock showed. In The Creation of Order in Humanity (1843) Proudhon argued that the ideas and motives of individuals are the motivating forces of history.[147] He decried Hegel's view of history as an inevitable progression, however, affirming progress only as an eternal process of change, and favouring an antinomial way of thinking in pairs of irreconcilable opposites to Hegel's dialectical method.[148] Marx belittled this un-Hegelian approach in his The Poverty of Philosophy of 1847, his reply to Proudhon's The Philosophy of Poverty of the previous year. Proudhon, Marx claimed inaccurately, was "incapable of rising higher than the first two rungs of simple thesis and antithesis."[149]

Other differences emerged between the two men concerning the revolution of 1848. Proudhon remonstrated that the revolution had been subverted by a power-hungry revolutionary party, thus resulting in only a shift in power within the state.[150] For Marx this was to be expected and indeed desired; he hoped that a proletarian government would seize the means of production and create a centralized planning economy. This would effect the second step in his dialectical programme of capitalism succeeding feudalism, socialism replacing capitalism, and Communism bringing the final synthesis that would end all class antagonism, making further change unnecessary.[151] As an anarchist, Proudhon objected to the idea of historical progress culminating in social perfection and warned that a centralized economy would give tyrannical powers to the state.[152]

These disputes between Proudhon and Marx revealed three essential differences between anarchism and Marxism. First, Marxists believe that all human ideals are shaped by material conditions, whereas anarchists are inclined, as Gandhi did, to decry Marx's "insensate worship of matter"[153] in the belief that history is directed by the human mind and will. For Marxists morality is an aspect of the class struggle; Lenin supported proletarian morality because it was dialectically predestined to succeed bourgeois morality,[154] and Engels admitted that "a truly human morality" would flourish only when class differences were eradicated.[155] In contrast, anarchists apprehend moral values as absolute and metaphysical qualities.

Second, Marxists stipulate that the dictatorship of the proletariat must precede the truly Communist society, whereas anarchists caution that this interim period would perpetuate a corrupt state socialism, and insist that decentralism can be achieved only through a non-Party revolution. Third, Marxists see history as marching toward Communism, while anarchists reject historical determinism and exalt Heraclitean flux in nature and society.

Woodcock has always been aware that anarchism opposed not only Marxism but other dominant currents of nineteenth-century thought. In the early forties he regretted that the theory of evolution had been used to vindicate a naive belief in material progress, and thereby had fostered a callow revolutionary optimism. "The social currents which seemed to promise progress in the nineteenth century have ended," he noted bitterly, "in the two most violent wars in history, the rise of totalitarianism and the tragic betrayal of the Russian, Spanish, and Chinese revolutions."[156] Woodcock felt that this had happened partly because "Marxists and trade unionists allowed themselves to be impregnated with the materialist ideas bred by nineteenth century capitalism."[157] While derogating Marxist materialism, he made clear that anarchists "do not abstract from events a God called History and place our destiny in his hands.... Instead, we believe that the ultimate determinant of the character of social change is the will of men."[158] Here he identified the temptation of complacency potential in the Marxist myth of historical determinism, stressing the anarchist belief in the individual's absolute moral responsibility for his social actions.

The anarchist economist E.F. Schumacher also queried Marxist materialism, and Marx's claims that his social and historical analyses were scientific.[159] He pointed out, moreover, that anarchism runs counter to the predominant materialism of our age, expressed in the relativist denial of moral absolutes, the positivist belief in the primacy of scientific truth as a way of knowing about the cosmos, and the Freudian view that human ideals are merely the results of frustrated or perverted sexual energy.[160] Schumacher eschewed these anti-idealistic views of man, voicing the anarchist warning that social progress should be seen not as the unlimited development of science and technology, but as the direction of these forces for moral purposes.[161]

The efforts of Woodcock and Schumacher to distinguish anarchism from some of the central currents of modern thought are important for two reasons. First, they prevent us from confounding anarchism by association with more familiar political attitudes, such as progressivism or liberalism. Anarchism is, in fact, a strange mixture of radical and conservative views, so that Woodcock's ideas have an unexpected affinity with those of philosophical conservatives such as George Grant. In Philosophy in the Mass Age (1959), Grant voiced beliefs Woodcock would share; he decried the Marxist faith in material progress and in the mastery of nature through technology, asserting that the Marxist hope of overcoming evil through social melioration was a denial of the subjective freedom of the human spirit.[162] Nor is anarchism, as its unthinking disciples and superficial detractors have assumed, merely the liberalist "emancipation of greed"[163] or the chaotic "freedom to do as one likes"[164] disparaged by Grant and Matthew Arnold. Woodcock has pointed out that the greater freedoms achieved through mutual aid would involve greater sacrifices, both in maintaining a decentralized government in the local community and on the global level in solving problems such as world food distribution.

Second, understanding the place of anarchism in the intellectual history of the past two centuries allows us to see clearly its extreme idealism. It was not surprising that in the fifteen years after his arrival in Canada Woodcock came to question many of the impracticable tenets of what Sidney Webb, in his Socialism in England, called that "consistent and almost sublime doctrine."[165] He concluded that if anarchist ideals could not be enacted holus bolus, they might serve to inspire gradual changes. In later years, he clung tenaciously to the moral vision of anarchism, making his social criticisms with sedulous dedication, and adapting anarchist principles to Canadian society. Meanwhile, Woodcock carved out a prominent place for himself as a critic of Canadian literature, following a Romantic critical approach that was directly related to his embattled but irrepressible idealism.

Notes

1. George Woodcock, "Massey's Harvest," in A George Woodcock Reader, ed. & intro. Doug Fetherling (Ottawa: Deneau & Greenberg, 1980), p. 30.

2. Woodcock, "Letter to Herbert Read," in Reader, p. 26.

3. George Woodcock, "An Interview with George Woodcock," by Geoff Hancock, Canadian Fiction Magazine, Nos. 30-31 (1979), p. 140.

4. George Woodcock, in a letter to Robert Weaver of 18 May, 1976, Taking it to the Letter (Montreal: Quadrant Editions, 1981), p. 103.

5. Woodcock, letter to Al Purdy of 19 July, 1977, in Taking It, p. 117.

6. Letter received from George Woodcock, 3 October, 1980.

7. Considering Woodcock's usual eloquence, and his habitually diligent attention to detail, it is probable that haste in the preparation of his manuscripts - a haste brought on by financial need - caused these very few errors in the bulky corpus of his work.

   First, he mixed metaphors in The Doukhobors (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1977), p. 23, recording that the cultural traditions of this group were "still handed down from mouth to mouth." Another example of this uncharacteristic awkwardness occurred in Asia, Gods and Cities: Aden to Tokyo (London: Faber, 1966), p. 13, where he observed that "discontent was explosively fermenting in the native quarters of Aden."
   Second, Woodcock used the phrase "verbal wit" in describing the poetry of A.M. Klein, in "On A.M. Klein: A Tentative Note," The World of Canadian Writing: Critiques and Recollections (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1980), p. 279. Wit is found, of course, in other means of expression than language, but in the

context of a discussion of poetry the phrase was tautological. Third, he committed the gaffe of treating an absolute quality comparatively in his article "On the Poetry of Al Purdy," World, p. 263, where he wrote that the old stone mills of Roblin Lake were "more vanished than the Breton megaliths."

A small but glaring inattention to factual detail appeared in Woodcock's monograph on Mordecai Richler (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1971), p. 6, where he stated that "South of St. Lawrence there were streets of even poorer Jews." St. Lawrence Boulevard runs roughly north and south, dividing central Montreal; from this starting point, the streets are numbered both eastward and westward. There is nothing south of this important thoroughfare but the lower branch of the St. Lawrence River. One may surmise that Woodcock made this slip because Richler, in a passage quoted from The Street, mentioned the streets "below" St. Urbain (which runs parallel to St. Lawrence). Yet this was a reference not to the points of the compass, but to the way levels of income rise gradually as one ascends the slope of Mount Royal.

8. Woodcock developed the habits of exploring a subject first in a series of articles and then amalgamating these with new material to form a book, and of transplanting passages verbatim from one publication to another. The latter practice was abundantly evident in the first volume of his autobiography, Letter to the Past (Vancouver: Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 1982). Covering Woodcock's life until he came to Canada in 1949, the book contained numerous excerpts from articles and interviews mentioned in Chapter I of the present study.

9. This pervasive influence is virtually incalculable in precise terms; most of Woodcock's books were funded by publishers' advances and royalties from earlier books, and none by government Arts Grants.

10. George Woodcock, Dawn and the Darkest Hour: A Biographical Study of Aldous Huxley (London: Faber, 1972), p. 24.

11. George Woodcock, "Unrealized Wealth," Freedom, 10, No. 16 (July 9, 1949), p. 3.

12. George Woodcock, Ravens and Prophets: An Account of Journeys in British Columbia, Alberta, and Southern Alaska (London: Alan Wingate, 1952), p. 113.

13. Woodcock, Ravens and Prophets, p. 144.

14. Woodcock, Ravens and Prophets, p. 241.

15. Woodcock, Ravens and Prophets, pp. 17, 205, 118-19.

16. Woodcock, Ravens and Prophets: on prices, pp. 43, 140, 156; on bookshops, p. 239; on lakes, p. 198; on Hallowe'en, p. 142; on words, pp. 54, 66, 157.

17. Woodcock, Ravens and Prophets, pp. 15, 243-44, 126.

18. Woodcock mentioned this fact in Canada and the Canadians (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1970), p. 16, replying that "My observations were not patronizing, but they were critical."

19. Letter received from George Woodcock, 29 May, 1982.

20. George Woodcock, To the City of the Dead: An Account of Travels in Mexico (London: Faber, 1957), p. 123.

21. Woodcock, City of the Dead, p. 122.

22. Woodcock, City of the Dead, p. 53.

23. Woodcock, City of the Dead, p. 29.

24. Woodcock, City of the Dead, p. 115.

25. Woodcock, City of the Dead, p. 121.

26. Woodcock, City of the Dead, p. 138.
Twenty years later Woodcock recalled this moment in his poem, "The Game Shop at Colmar," a bitterly ironic meditation on the exclusively human practice of decapitation: see Notes on Visitations (Toronto: Anansi, 1975), pp. 81-83.

27. Aldous Huxley, Beyond the Mexique Bay (London: Chatto & Windus, 1934), pp. 143-44.

28. It seems that Greene was obsessed with images of evil throughout his life, and only through them was compelled to have faith in heaven as the necessary other term in the duality. The following passage from The Lawless Roads (London: Longmans & Green, 1939), p. 11, reveals much about his artistic vision:

> "And so faith came to one - shapelessly, without dogma, a presence above a croquet lawn, something associated with violence, cruelty, evil across the way. One began to believe in heaven because one believed in hell, but for a long time it was only hell one could picture with a certain intimacy - the pitchpine

partitions of dormitories where everybody was never quiet at the same time; lavatories without locks.... Those were the primary symbols; life later altered them; in a midland city, riding on trams in winter past the Gothic hotel, the super-cinema, the sooty newspaper office where one worked at night, passing the single professional prostitute trying to keep the circulation going under the blue and powdered skin, one began slowly, painfully, reluctantly, to populate heaven."

29. D.H. Lawrence, Mornings in Mexico (New York: Knopf, 1927), p. 111.

30. Woodcock, City of the Dead, p. 104.

31. Woodcock, City of the Dead, pp. 185-86.

32. George Woodcock, Incas and other Men: Travels in the Andes (London: Faber, 1959), pp. 245, 165.

33. Woodcock, Incas, pp. 33-34, 74.

34. Woodcock, Incas, p. 51.

35. George Woodcock, The Empire of Shadows, dir. by Gerald Newman for CBC's Saturday Night, 2 August, 1964.
All references are to the CBC recording of the play held at the CBC Radio Archive, 90 Sumach St., Toronto, Ontario.

36. George Woodcock, "The Libertarian and the Churches," Freedom, 11, No. 24 (July 8, 1950), p. 2.

37. George Woodcock, "What is a Catholic anarchist?," rev. of The Autobiography of a Catholic Anarchist, by Ammon Hennacy, Freedom, 15, No. 17 (April 24, 1954), p. 2.

38. George Woodcock, "'Catholic Anarchist' Controversy," Freedom, 15, No. 24 (June 12, 1954), p. 2.

39. George Woodcock, "Nurture the Positive Trends," Freedom, 17, No. 44 (Oct. 27, 1956), pp. 2, 4.

40. Woodcock, "Positive Trends," p. 2.

41. Woodcock, "Positive Trends," p. 4.

42. Marie Louise Berneri, Journey Through Utopia, Foreword by George Woodcock (New York: Schocken Books,

1971), p. 2.

43. George Woodcock, "Utopias: Pro and Con," CBC Learning Systems, four cassettes, 1973.

44. Woodcock, Foreword to Journey, p. xi.
Chad Walsh, in From Utopia to Nightmare (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1962) shared this view that Utopian planning constitutes a great danger to freedom in modern society:

> "It is easy now to see why the 20th century has been a time when utopian dreams shone less brightly. The essence of utopias is planning. In the 19th century, when America and western Europe made such a fetish of 'freedom' that it was virtuous to leave a man free to starve and his children free to work in the coalmines, planning seemed the cure for the sicknesses of society. The 20th century has its craw full of planning. The Nazi movement was thoroughly planned, Communism is planned. The organisation man lives a life planned for him. In Washington, no matter who inhabits the White House, planners stoke the electronic computers and the planning continues day and night." (p. 178)

45. George Woodcock, "Fantasy and Utopia," rev. of Utopian Fantasy, by Richard Gerber, Freedom, 17, No. 2, (Jan. 14, 1956), p. 2.

46. George Woodcock, Anarchism: A History of Libertarian Ideas and Movements (Chicago: World Publishing, 1962), p. 75.

47. Woodcock, "Utopias: Pro and Con."
Hans Freyer voiced the same view in his 1936 survey of Utopian thought, Die politische Insel, Eine Geschichte der Utopien von Platon bis zur Gegenwart (Leipzig, 1936), p. 82:

> "Here we touch the limit of utopian thinking which cannot be crossed; we touch as it were its ineradicable illogicality. Some historical process has to and is to lead to utopia. But no historical process - this is the postulate - is to lead out of it and beyond it. Utopia must be without history. It fights against history, and this fight must be lost."

48. Woodcock, Foreword to Journey, p. x.

49. Edward Bellamy, Looking Backward (New York: Random House, 1888), p. 47.

50. quoted in A.L. Morton, The English Utopia (London: Laurence & Wishart, 1952), p. 155.
Lewis Mumford, in his The Story of Utopias (New York: Viking Press, 1962), p. 274, felt the same repulsion as Morris and Woodcock toward nineteenth century scientific utopias such as Looking Backward:

> "These Utopias become vast reticulations of steel and redtape, until we feel that we are caught in the Nightmare of the Age of Machinery, and shall never escape... the means has become the end, and the genuine problem of ends and means has been forgotten .... so little of human significance remains when the problems of mechanical and political organization have been disposed of."

51. Woodcock, Anarchism, p. 24.

52. Woodcock, Anarchism, p. 24.

53. John Ruskin, "The Nature of Gothic," in The Stones of Venice (London: Dent, 1907), 3 vols., illus.
For a full account of the influence of "The Nature of Gothic" upon Morris, see E.P. Thompson, William Morris: Romantic to Revolutionary (London: Merlin Press, 1955), pp. 33-38. As Thompson explains, Ruskin's beliefs that labour must be a creative expression of the worker's entire moral and spiritual being, and that it should integrate the human faculties rather than divide them, were central themes in News from Nowhere.

54. William Morris, News from Nowhere, ed. & intro. by James Redmond (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970), p. 113.

55. This belief, rooted in the rise of science of the seventeenth century, was expressed by Francis Bacon in his New Atlantis, Works, ed. by Basil Montagu, 16 vols. (London: 1825), Vol. II, p. 378, wherein he promised that science would bring "the enlarging of the bounds of human empire, to the effecting of all things possible." In Bacon's fictional Utopia, the ruling caste of scientists lived in pomp and extravagance with limitless funds, employing secret agents, and witholding information from the populace, who lived in penury within a monarchy whose laws had not changed in two thousand years.

56. Morris, News from Nowhere, p. 68.

57. Morris, News from Nowhere, p. 91.

58. Woodcock, Civil Disobedience (Toronto: CBC, 1966), p. 45.

59. Woodcock, Anarchism, pp. 442-43.

60. George Woodcock, "Anarchism and Public Opinion," Freedom, 8, No. 10 (June 28, 1947), p. 2.

61. Woodcock, Anarchism, p. 24.

62. Plato, The Republic, in The Dialogues of Plato, tr. by Benjamin Jowett, 5 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1875), vol. 4, p. 592.

63. Frederick Engles, Socialism, Utopian and Scientific, tr. by Edward Aveling (London: S. Sonnenschein, 1892), p. 35.

64. Engels, Socialism, p. 72.

65. Woodcock, "Utopias: Pro and Con."

66. Woodcock, Anarchism, p. 469.

67. Woodcock, "Utopias: Pro and Con."

68. George Woodcock, El Dorado, dir. by Raymond Whitehouse for CBC's Opening Night, March 9, 1951.
All references are to a recording of the play held at the CBC Radio Archive, 90 Sumach Street, Toronto, Ontario.

69. George Woodcock, "Island of Demons," Two Plays (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1977), p. 12.
"Island of Demons" was broadcast originally as a radio play in two parts. The first part, "Bird of Stone," was performed on CBC's Vancouver Theatre on March 14, 1960, and dealt with events leading up to the lovers' banishment to the island, while the second part, "Island of Demons" (Vancouver Theatre, March 21, 1960) contained most of what became the published play.

70. Woodcock, Anarchism, p. 34.

71. George Woodcock and Ivan Avakumovic, The Anarchist Prince (London: T.V. Boardman, 1949), p. 280.

72. Woodcock, Anarchism, p. 96.

73. Woodcock, Anarchism, p. 95.

74. Woodcock, Anarchism, p. 103.

75. Woodcock, Anarchism, pp. 167-182.

76. Woodcock & Avakumovic, Anarchist Prince, p. 111.

In Anarchism, p. 170, Woodcock made his preference even clearer, commenting that Bakunin "had an expansive generosity of spirit and an openness of mind that were entirely lacking in Marx, who was vain, vindictive, and insufferably pedantic."

77. E.H. Carr, Karl Marx: A Study in Fanaticism (London: Dent, 1934), pp. 247, 249, 257.

78. Isaiah Berlin, Karl Marx: His Life and Environment (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 264.

79. Berlin, Marx, p. 109.

80. Berlin, Marx, p. 262; Carr, Marx, p. 256.

81. Woodcock, Anarchism, p. 146.

82. Woodcock, Anarchism, p. 174.

83. George Woodcock, The Lion and the Tiger Cub, dir. by R. Chesterman for CBC's Monday Evening, Spring, 1977. All references are to an actor's copy of the play loaned to me by the author (who read the part of the narrator). Woodcock was unable to name the precise date of the play's performance, though he mentioned in a letter to David Helwig, dated 1st February, 1977, and printed in Taking it to the Letter, p. 110, that the play would "be appearing on CBC Monday Evening some time in the spring."

84. Woodcock, actor's copy of Tiger Cub, epilogue.

85. Woodcock, The Anarchist Prince, p. 270.

86. D.S. Savage, "Anarchism," in A Political Art: Essays and Images in Honour of George Woodcock, ed. & Intro. by W.H. New (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1978), p. 145.

87. Savage, "Anarchism," A Political Art, p. 131.

88. George Woodcock, William Godwin: A Biographical Study, Foreword by Herbert Read (London: Porcupine Press, 1946), pp- 169-170.

89. Woodcock, Godwin, pp. 230-232.

90. Woodcock, Anarchism, pp. 475-76.

91. Woodcock, Anarchism, pp. 45-49.

92. Woodcock quoted this statement in his biography of

Read, The Stream and the Source (London: Faber, 1972), p. 221.

93. George Woodcock, "The Menace of Optimism," War Commentary, 5, No. 9 (March, 1944), pp. 5-6.

94. George Woodcock, Dawn and the Darkest Hour: A Study of Aldous Huxley (New York: Viking, 1972), p. 25.

95. Letter received from George Woodcock, 11 June, 1980.

96. George Woodcock, rev. of The Chinese by Wilfred Galbraith, War Commentary, 3, No. 15 (July, 1942), pp. 5-6.
Woodcock praised Galbraith for recognizing that the Chinese ruling class has always been motivated by Confucianism, which they interpret as "a benovelent Machiavellianism," while the Taoist Lao-Tzu wrote of the primacy of the people. He criticized Galbraith for assuming that Stalinist Communism was the only Chinese revolutionary creed, pointing to Taoism as an anarchistic alternative.

97. George Woodcock, The Paradox of Oscar Wilde (London: T.V. Boardman, 1950), pp. 147-48.

98. George Woodcock, Thomas Merton, Monk and Poet: A Critical Study (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1978), p. 159.

99. Woodcock, Merton, pp. 124-125.
Merton also adumbrated other anarchist principles with which Woodcock would have agreed; he spoke out against Marxist determinism and the ideal of social progress, and against the totalitarian dangers of rigid social planning. (pp. 7, 104, 122-24)

100. Woodcock, Merton, p. 127.

101. George Woodcock, "An Interview with George Woodcock," by Geoff Hancock, Canadian Fiction Magazine, Nos. 30-31 (1979), p. 140.

102. George Woodcock, Mohandas Gandhi (New York: Viking Press, 1971), p. 89.

103. In Gandhi, p. 94, Woodcock recorded Gandhi's statement that "The ideally non-violent state would be an ordered anarchy."

104. Woodcock, Gandhi, p. 95.

105. George Woodcock, Faces of India: A Travel Narrative (London: Faber, 1964), p. 92.

106. George Woodcock, The Rejection of Politics (Toronto: New Press, 1972), pp. 55-57.

107. Woodcock, The Anarchist Prince, p. 311.

108. Woodcock, Anarchism, p. 28.

109. Woodcock, The Anarchist Prince, pp. 230, 322, 326, 329.

110. Philip E. Slater, The Pursuit of Loneliness: American Culture at the Breaking Point (Boston: Beacon Press, 1970), p. 133.

111. Woodcock, The Anarchist Prince, p. 328.

112. George Woodcock, New Life to the Land (London: Freedom Press, 1942).

113. Woodcock, Anarchism, p. 472.

114. Woodcock, Anarchism, p. 474.

115. George Woodcock, from tape entitled "Neo-Anarchism in the 1960's," in CBC Phonotape Series, 1969.

116. Woodcock, The Rejection of Politics, p. 44.

117. Woodcock, Anarchism, p. 476.

118. Oscar Wilde, "The Soul of Man under Socialism," in The Critical Writings of Oscar Wilde, ed. Richard Ellmann (New York: Random House, 1968), pp. 266, 260.

119. In "The Soul of Man under Socialism," The Critical Writings, ed. Ellmann, Wilde uttered two strident affirmations of impractical Utopian dreams, in the whimsical spirit of Morris's Nowhere:

> "A map of the world that does not include Utopia is not worth even glancing at, for it leaves out the one country at which humanity is always landing." (pp. 269-270)

> "A practical scheme is either a scheme that is already in existence, or a scheme that could be carried out under existing conditions. But it is exactly the existing conditions that one objects to; and any scheme that could accept these conditions is

wrong and foolish. The conditions will be done away with, and human nature will change" (p. 284).

120. Wilde, "Soul of Man," *Critical Writings*, ed. Ellmann, pp. 261, 260, 269.

121. Wilde, "Soul of Man," *Critical Writings*, ed. Ellmann, p. 284.

122. Wilde, "Soul of Man, *Critical Writings*, ed. Ellmann, p. 275.

123. Woodcock, *The Paradox of Oscar Wilde*, p. 223. Woodcock recorded that since boyhood Wilde had loved the element of satanism in his great-uncle, Charles Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer*, and when exiled in France he appropriated the name of Sebastian Melmoth, feeling that, like the tragic hero of the novel, he had made the Devil's bargain and was condemned to wander (pp. 32-35). Yet this display of self-pity did not alter Woodcock's view that Wilde had attained a spiritual grace, nor did Wilde's histrionic insistence that homosexuality had been his path to the knowledge of evil elicit any criticism.

124. Hesketh Pearson, *Oscar Wilde: His Life and Wit* (New York: Harper, 1946), p. 322.

125. Pearson, *Wilde*, p. 288.

126. Woodcock, *The Paradox of Oscar Wilde*, p. 7.

127. Woodcock, *The Paradox of Oscar Wilde*, p. 7.

128. Woodcock, *Anarchist Prince*, p. 217.

129. Woodcock, *Anarchist Prince*, p. 185.

130. Woodcock, *Anarchist Prince*, p. 225.

131. Woodcock, *Anarchist Prince*, p. 267.

132. Woodcock, *Anarchist Prince*, pp. 389-390.

133. Woodcock, *Anarchist Prince*, p. 400.

134. Woodcock, *Anarchism*, p. 216. Several modern biologists have supported mutual aid. Though Kropotkin's arguments that co-operation was evident even among wolves was inconclusive, Adolf Portmann, in his *Animals as Social Beings*, tr. by

Oliver Colburn (London: Hutchinson, 1961), p. 230, has shown that wolves carry meat in their mouths for their offspring, and that the African hyena, upon returning from a long hunting expedition, will vomit up its food for its young. Even Konrad Lorenz, in his On Aggression, tr. by Marjorie Latzke (London: Methuen, 1966), p. 86, has admitted that the aggressive defense of territories among animals has mutually beneficial consequences, for it preserves an equable distribution of the members of a species, preventing exhaustion of soil, vegetation, or animal life. Lewis Thomas, in Lives of a Cell: Notes of a Biology Watcher (London: Penguin, 1978), p. 7, argued that symbiotic relationships are far more common in nature than our ethos of individualism would lead us to assume. Thomas commented that every individual is, upon close examination, a living community; cell mitochondria have many of the traits of separate organisms inhabiting their hosts, and microbes appear to be independent, but "with our present technology, we can no more isolate one from the rest, and rear it alone, than we can keep a single bee from drying up like a desquamated cell when removed from its hive."

135. Woodcock, Anarchist Prince, p. 306.

136. Woodcock, Anarchist Prince, p. 306.

137. Woodcock, Anarchism, pp. 212, 221.

138. George Woodcock, Pierre-Joseph Proudhon: His Life and Work (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1956), pp. 97, 256, 208, 78-9.

139. Woodcock, Proudhon, p. 270.

140. Woodcock, Proudhon, pp. 99-100, 172.

141. Woodcock, Proudhon, p. 172.

142. Woodcock, Proudhon, pp. 220, 110, 270.

143. Woodcock, Proudhon, p. 44.

144. Friedrich Engels and Karl Marx, Marx and Engels: Selected Correspondence, 1846-1895, tr. with notes by Dona Torr (New York: International, 1942), p. 171.

145. Karl Marx, Capital, ed. Friedrich Engels, tr. from third German ed. by Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1970), p. xiv.

146. Friedrich Engels and Karl Marx, *Selected Works of Marx and Engels*, ed. V. Odoralsky (Moscow: Co-operative Publishers, 1935), p. 153.

147. Woodcock, *Proudhon*, p. 79.

148. Woodcock, *Proudhon*, p. 90.
"The antinomy cannot be resolved," Proudhon stated in *De La Justice dans la Revolution et dans L'Eglise* (1858); "there lies all the imperfection of Hegelian philosophy."

149. Woodcock, *Proudhon*, p. 89.

150. Woodcock, *Anarchism*, p. 124.

151. R.N. Carew Hunt came to precisely this conclusion in his *The Theory and Practice of Communism* (Harmondsworth, England: Pelican Books, 1963), p. 106:

> "All we are told, however, is that during the transition period the state will dialectically encompass its destruction and give place to a true communist society based upon voluntary association. Yet how this society will be held together is not revealed. Nor does Marx tell us whether the dialectic ceases at this stage, though on his premises it must do so, seeing that the division of society into classes, which has been the cause of conflict throughout history, has been removed."

152. Woodcock, *Proudhon*, p. 138.
In *Communism*, p. 105, Hunt described this dispute between anarchists and Communists, remarking that, though Marx hoped that the dissolution of the State would succeed the centralized economy of proletarian rule, "the anarchists had good grounds for suspecting that the type of economy he envisaged would render its retention a necessity."

153. Woodcock, *Gandhi*, p. 59.

154. V.I. Lenin, *Selected Works*, tr. by J. Fineberg (New York: International, 1947P, 2 vols., II, p. 667.

155. Friedrich Engels, *The Dialectics of Nature*, ed. C.P. Dutt, Preface and Notes by J.B.S. Haldane (New York: International, 1940), pp. 109-110.

156. Woodcock, "Optimism," *War Commentary* 5, No. 9, (March, 1944), pp. 5-6.

157. George Woodcock, "The Future of the Proletariat,"

War Commentary, 3, No. 18 (Mid-August, 1942), pp. 11-12.

158. Woodcock, "Optimism," War Commentary, 5, No. 9 (March, 1944), pp. 5-6.

159. E.F. Schumacher, Small is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered, Intro. by Theodore Roszak (New York: Harper, 1975), p. 89.
Hunt, in Communism, pp. 106-107, also asserted that Marx's thought was by no means strictly scientific:

> "There is a double strain in Marx. He has been called 'the father of modern sociology,' and he well deserves the title as the author of the most penetrating analysis of social relations which appeared in his generation. But he has also been called 'the last of the prophets,' and this is true also, for his predictions regarding the 'higher stage of socialism' are, indeed apocalyptic rather than analytic. A generation later Georges Sorel was to argue that every movement which aims at capturing the masses must possess its 'myth,' that is, something which has the power to seize their imagination and inspire them to action. It is the belief in an impending event which will transform the world. What that event is and how it will come to pass is never clearly defined, for if it could be it would lose its potency; but there is always something praiseworthy or glorious in contributing to its consummation. It is Marx's incursions into prophecy which have furnished Communism with its mystique."

160. Schumacher, Small, pp. 89-92.

161. Schumacher, Small, p. 94.

162. George Grant, Philosophy in the Mass Age (Toronto: Copp Clark, 1959), pp. 71-75.

163. George Grant, Technology and Empire: Perspectives on North America (Toronto: Anansi, 1969), p. 26.

164. Matthew Arnold, Culture and Anarchy: An Essay in Political and Social Criticism (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1971), p. 60

165. quoted in Woodcock, Kropotkin, p. 225.

CHAPTER III

THE ROMANTIC AS PUBLIC CRITIC

In the early sixties when George Woodcock began to devote much of his time to the criticism of Canadian literature, his critical principles were both expressive of his earlier experience and designed to deal with the problems of a nascent literature. In a 1955 essay that was tantamount to a critical manifesto, he adjured Canadian critics to define "the peculiar nature of Canadian experience" while considering "in what relation life and literature in Canada stand to the world continuum."[1] With his international background and his special interest in the regional patterns of cultural life, Woodcock was well suited to this task. His eclectic turn of mind no doubt informed his insistence that the Canadian critic, when he emerged, would have to be "something of a psychologist, something of a sociologist, something of a philosopher, something of a mythologist."[2] Finally, his own career as a writer and his anarchist individualism informed his warning that the critic should not become so absorbed in cultural phenomena as to lose sight of the writer's "unique intelligence dealing with those problems of thought and morality which are universal."[3]

Canadian Literature was begun in 1959 with these editorial guidelines; Woodcock wrote to one contributor that the ambience of the quarterly was its "interest in the writer as a writer and the sources of his work and ideas."[4] To his credit, Woodcock maintained this emphasis, never allowing his regionalist view of Canadian culture to become proscriptive. In 1960 he drew satisfaction from the growth and "tentative variety" of our literature, but advised critics to be wary of pursuing the *ignis fatuus* of Canadian identity:

> After all, it is the individual books and the individual writers, each secure in his autonomy as an artist, that should first concern us. Later, when we have considered, appreciated, and criticized such and such writers, it will be time for the literary historian to come and draw his conclusions. To fire the melting pot here and now, to attempt anything more than the provisional establishment of common denominators of contemporary Canadian writing, to see in it features that are easily and patriotically identifiable, may do some obscure service to political nationalism. It can only do disservice to literature itself.[5]

In accordance with his anarchist opposition to nationalism and corresponding reverence for regional and individual differences, Woodcock refrained from firing the melting pot in later years as well.

These and other critical attitudes were shared with some of the subjects of Woodcock's biographies. Herbert

Read despised the critic "with a head but without a heart, armed with instruments of precision but without love," and Woodcock supported Read's rejection of all critical dogmas in favour of empathetic understanding:

> "Sympathy and empathy - feeling with and feeling into," were for him [Read] the primary processes of criticism, and this meant that "there can be no immutable canons of criticism, no perfect critics. Criticism is good and sane when there is a meeting of intention and appreciation. There is then an act of recognition, and any worthwhile criticism begins with that reaction."[6]

Eclectic critics like Read fulfilled, Woodcock argued, "the need for synthesis in a world where the progressive division of functions has resulted in the frustration of intelligence and the fission of culture."[7] Woodcock was this sort of thinker, his diverse interests unified by his ubiquitous anarchist beliefs; in his criticism he followed, moreover, what he called a "synthetic approach," giving due value to every aspect of a work of literature.[8] In his comments on other critics, Woodcock praised the eclectic use of whatever method would serve best to elucidate a particular work, and eschewed narrow views of literature as "the product of pathological disorders" or "a weapon in ideological warfare."[9]

Woodcock also followed Read in denouncing the idea of a hierarchy of literary forms, being repelled by the notion of "poetry, fiction, and drama united in current cant under 'creative writing' floating somewhere in the empyrean" with "other genres wallowing in the depths below."[10] As a logical consequence of this stance, Woodcock affirmed Wilde's view that criticism is not merely ancillary to literature but creative in its own right. The best criticism, Wilde commented, "is more creative than creation, and the primary aim of the critic is to see the object as in itself it really is not."[11] Working from this premise, Woodcock insisted that Northrop Frye, in his Anatomy of Criticism, had "exemplified more effectively than Wilde himself the latter's argument that criticism is primarily a creative process, leaving its masterpieces to impress and to move by their skill and grandeur long after their subjects have ceased to interest us."[12]

There was, however, a hint of derogation in this praise, for in describing Frye's great work as "a handbook of no real practical value to the critic" he intimated that Frye had neglected an important aspect of his critical function. Frye had overlooked the practical job of interpreting emerging literature for the public at large, and it was precisely this task to which Woodcock devoted himself, adopting the role of the "public critic" as Frye defined it:

> It is the task of the public critic to exemplify how a man of taste uses and evaluates literature and thus show how literature is to be absorbed into society .... He has picked up his ideas from a pragmatic study of literature and does not create or enter into

> a literary structure.[13]

The academic critic's tendency "to analyse the work of literature as if it existed *in vacuo*" appalled Woodcock; as a public critic, he preferred "to see the work in a total context, relating it not only to the man who makes it, but also to the public that reads it."[14] He excoriated categorizing criticism for failing to convey the vitality of literature:

> For that one needs the field naturalist, the man who follows literature as it appears, who submits himself to the biographical heresy and the intentional heresy and the aesthetic heresy and by all these and any other means seeks to stimulate his empathetic understanding of the work. In other words, not the Mandarin, not the academic critic, not the structuralist with his beautiful webs and mind-made palaces, but our humble servant, the public critic.[15]

A studied ambivalence emerged between Woodcock's respect for the kind of creative criticism that claims preeminence over literature itself and his belief that the practical critic must humble himself before literature. His own critical practice has shown that his deeper sympathies lie with the latter position; whatever his admiration for the systems-building of Frye or the epigrammatic style of Wilde, Woodcock has never attempted to emulate them. In arguing that the critic should never lose sight of the social context of literature, he took umbrage with the New Critics "who until recently were so influential in our universities and who regarded the author's life and even his intentions in writing a poem or a book as irrelevant to the close enrapt study of the text itself."[16] Woodcock saw himself as part of a counter-tradition that had flourished outside the universities.

In a sweeping generalization, Woodcock inferred that the New Critics had driven the "synthetic approach" from the halls of academe. He did not acknowledge the numerous academic critics who continued to stress the social and historical contexts of literature. Lionel Trilling, for example, insisted in The Liberal Imagination (1950) that "the literary work is ineluctably a historical fact" and that "its historicity is a fact in our aesthetic experience."[17] In Tradition and Poetic Structure (1960) J.V. Cunningham asserted that the historical and formalist approaches were complementary parts of the same critical process, explaining that a proper blend of the two constitutes a moral stance:

> For the understanding of an author in the scholarly sense involves the exercise under defined conditions of the two fundamental principles of morality in the western tradition: 1) the principle of dignity, or of responsibility to the external fact, in the special form of respect for another person as revealed in his works; and 2) the principle of love, the exercise of sympathetic insight, or of imaginative transformation.[18]

Woodcock's erroneous assumption was caused at least partly by bias; the authors he named as part of the tradition of practical criticism - George Orwell, Edmund Wilson, V.S. Pritchett, Aldous Huxley, Dwight MacDonald, and Herbert Read - were all men of letters of Woodcock's radical stamp, mingling criticism with leftist polemics. In his biographies of Read, Orwell, and Huxley, he noted that his subjects' emphases on contextual criticism coincided with his own. Read distinguished textual exegesis from the philosophical activity of criticism proper, which concerned, in Acton's words, "the latent background of conviction, discerning theory and habit, influences of thought and knowledge, of life and descent."[19] Woodcock observed that Orwell committed the personal fallacy and the intentional heresy: "He would have thought absurd and fraudulent the neocritical method by which a piece of writing is subjected in isolation to a close analysis of its content without relation to its context in any shape or form."[20] Similarly, Huxley's criticisms combined the moral, psychological, and historical approaches; "It is a way of penetrating to the heart of a work and the mind of its creator," Woodcock judged, "that can be as revealing as any close analysis."[21]

Over the years, Woodcock has sustained an obdurate vehemence in castigating the textual analysis of the New Critics.[22] In order to place his criticism in context, then, it is necessary to outline the basic texts and tenets of New Criticism and its progenitors. If Coleridge and Poe planted the seeds of formalistic doctrine, T.S. Eliot offered its first flowering in *The Sacred Wood* of 1920. Eliot proclaimed the high place of art as art, arguing that "when we are considering poetry we must consider it primarily as poetry and not another thing."[23] This open invitation for critics to move away from biographical study toward the scrutiny of the poem itself was answered by I.A. Richards, who pioneered the technique of verbal analysis. Using the methods of psychology to give literary criticism a scientific basis, Richards conducted classroom experiments wherein poems were ripped from their historical and biographical contexts; when documented in Richards' *Practical Criticism* (1929) these studies were acclaimed by the New Critics as the ultimate ideal of analysis.[24]

Meanwhile, in their *A Survey of Modernist Poetry* (1927) Robert Graves and Laura Riding contributed the seminal doctrine that the best poems are those which yield the most "difficult" meanings.[25] William Empson gave this criterion the name of "ambiguity" in his *Seven Types of Ambiguity* (1930), classifying these verbal nuances into seven types representing "stages of advancing logical disorder" or increasing "tensions" between the multiple meanings of words.[26] Empson gave a system to verbal analysis, and his use of the terms "ambiguity," "irony," and "tension" helped to make the approach popular.

Here a schism developed between the English formalist critics and the Americans who called themselves New Critics.

Neither Graves nor Empson derided the intentional or biographical fallacies; in 1955 Empson disapproved of the attack on "the fallacy of Intentionalism," insisting that "a critic should have insight into the mind of his author."[27] The American New Critics were, however, adamantly anti-historical. In their Preface to the influential College anthology, Understanding Poetry (1938), Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren condemned the study of poetry for any purpose beyond itself, whether historical, intentional, or moralistic.[28] Brooks claimed, in The Well-Wrought Urn (1947), that literary critics had learned too well the lesson of the anthropologist and the cultural historian: "We have learned it so well that the danger now, it seems to me, is not that we will forget the differences between poems of different historical periods, but that we may forget those qualities which they have in common."[29] Using such terms as paradox, irony, symbol, and connotation, Brooks examined the rhetorical structures of poems, and René Wellek and Austin Warren followed the same practice in their critical handbook, The Theory of Literature (1949), while Alan Tate endorsed the anti-historical approach in his The Man of Letters in the Modern World (1955).[30]

Tate and Robert Penn Warren had been students of the founder of New Criticism, John Crowe Ransom, who taught English at Vanderbilt University in Tennessee from 1924 to 1937, and later at Kenyon College in Ohio. Their school was supervened by another, led by R.S. Crane at Yale

University in Chicago. Crane objected to Brooks' "paradox," Ransom's "texture," Tate's "tension," and Empson's "ambiguities" on the grounds that, when used as the sole criteria of excellence, they isolated one part of the poem for examination, neglecting the work as a totality. He pleaded instead for an aesthetic of an Aristotelean lineage to distinguish between species of poems.[31] The Chicago critics were willing to consider the social, moral, and historical aspects of a work _after_ determining its category. This was, however, a family quarrel, for the two schools had more similarities than differences.

The finishing touches were given to New Critical theory by W.K. Wimsatt's _The Verbal Icon_ (1954), wherein he cautioned against the Intentional Fallacy, or the presumptuous and unfounded evaluation of whether an author had found the proper verbal object for his intentions, and the Affective Fallacy, or the notion that if the critic could testify to feeling certain emotions while reading a poem, then the poem must have conveyed those emotions successfully. The Intentional Fallacy was, he asserted, based upon the false assumption that the artist's state of mind during the creative act could be determined, while the Affective Fallacy was a confusion between a poem and its psychological effects, and bound to end in impressionism and relativism.[32] Wimsatt identified the telltale signs of the Intentional Fallacy in the use of such words as "sincere," "genuine," "authentic," and "original," and observed that the most common passwords of the Affective Fallacy were "intensity," "power," "vigour," and "strength."[33]

According to Wimsatt, these fallacies derived from the Romantic attitude that art was really about the emotional experience of its creation, which meant that the goal of historical and biographical criticism was to reconstruct that experience. Universal formal standards were superseded by the integrity of the artist's emotion, and by generic rules. The result was impressionism and relativism, whereby the author's emotions and the generic requirements or accepted attitudes of a given age constituted laws unto themselves, beyond question in measuring the work's ultimate value; as Cleanth Brooks stated, "the question as to a 'right' sensibility does not arise."[34] Brooks derided critical relativism, while pointing out that it had dominated English studies for the previous fifty years:

> The position taken is this; that one simply may not apply to Romantic poetry any standards except those of Romantic poetry itself, or, to Augustan poetry, any save those sanctioned by the Augustans. Each period is carefully sealed off from possible intrusion from the outside. The retreat from absolute standards of any kind to a complete relativism in criticism is bold but self-consistent.[35]

In keeping with his opposition to New Critical theory, Woodcock's criticism was pervaded by the intentional and affective fallacies and their attendant catchwords. He testified that some of A.M. Klein's poems had a "dense texture that is original because of its total rightness of feeling," but in others he discovered "the break from true feeling into forced feeling."[36] Woodcock assumed that by reading the poem he had come to know what Klein felt while composing, and could judge whether the poem expressed that feeling well. At other times he seemed to recognize the illogicality of the intentional fallacy; in reviewing Miriam Mandel's Lions at her Face, he commented that "a touch of insincerity sometimes makes a better poet, because it means a poet concerned with something more than externalizing his emotions."[37] Yet Woodcock rarely came to this point of criticizing the poet's sensibility; generally he restricted himself to impressionistic judgements about whether the poet had expressed his or her intentions.

By testifying affectively to the emotion felt in reading a poem, Woodcock assumed that he was presenting cogent and self-evident proof that the poem communicated that emotion effectively. A prime example of the affective fallacy at work in his criticism was his summary of the strengths and weaknesses of A.J.M. Smith's poetry:

> Occasionally the visions clarified through Smith's bright glass are too sharp for comfort, the detachment too remote for feeling to survive. More often, they are saved by the dense impact of the darker shapes that lie within the crystal.... It is this enduring sense of the shapeless beyond shape that gives Smith's best poems their peculiar rightness of tension, and makes his

> austerities so rich in implication.[38]

In this epideictic whirl of metaphors, nothing was clarified about the poetry. What makes a vision "too sharp" and how do some visions exhibit a "dense impact"? What is a "sense of the shapeless beyond shape" or "rightness of tension" in poetry? What are Smith's "austerities" and how are they rich in implication? Above all, why are these qualities criteria of poetic excellence?

Sharpness has figured most prominently in Woodcock's affective vocabulary, with luminosity running a close second. In 1976 he wrote in different reviews that Margaret Atwood's poems had a "sparse discipline" and a "sharp laconic discipline,"[39] while he found in Jim Green's poems "sharp facets of impression that lodge in the mind like glass splinters."[40] Dale Zieroth, in Woodcock's view, created "images of dark and almost Proustian luminosity,"[41] and Susan Landell wrote "still and patterned poems with a kind of luminous gravity."[42]

Other affective phrases were also used frequently. Woodcock found in Sid Marty's poems a "telling directness,"[43] and in those of Patrick Lane "a direct and telling response to experience," while he observed in Peter Trower's lyrics a "bleak directness."[44] In contrast, images of walking tended to mark Woodcock's comments on Earle Birney's poems. "Here the verse walks in lanky paces, though the steps still break" he wrote of "November Walk Near False Creek Mouth" in 1966, and a decade later noted that Birney's poetry had a "loping colloquial style."[45] The meaning of these felicitous descriptions was not elaborated, nor did Woodcock explain why some lines from a poem by Robert Finch showed "shallow triteness" and others "mere virtuosity" while lines from another poem contained "power and an admirable verbal percussion."[46] He seemed to assume that such phrases had a numinous power to convince if some lines of poetry were quoted to demonstrate his impressionistic comments.

This deliberate use of the intentional and affective fallacies led, as Wimsatt predicted, to impressionism and relativism. Any direct, telling, powerful, or original expression of emotion was judged to make a good poem. If the poet succeeded in being sharp, luminous, loping, bleak, or percussive it was enough; his intentions themselves - his values, reasoning, or sensibility - were not to be questioned. The focus of Woodcock's criticism was not on the words on the page, but on the intentions behind them, or on the emotions the poet felt while composing. As Wimsatt perceived, this Romantic concern with the creative process meant that the intuition or private part of art became "_the_ aesthetic fact," while the medium or public part was neglected.[47] In _The Mirror and the Lamp_ (1953), M.H. Abrams named this view the "expressive theory":

> In general terms, the central tendency of the expressive theory may be summarized in this way: a work of art is essentially the internal made external, resulting from a creative process operating under the impulse of feeling, and embodying the combined product of the poet's perceptions, thoughts, and feelings.[48]

The futility of defining poetry in terms of the imaginative process was shown by Woodcock's admission that this process is, by its very nature, unfathomable. He argued that "much in poetry comes into the mind without conscious thought," and therefore poems are not "deliberately constructed artifacts" but "retain an essential ambiguity which is most complex in the best poems."[49] The unconscious aspect of the creative process suggested an affinity with the religious impulse, and indeed Woodcock found it "hard to distinguish between the meditative process and the process of literary creation."[50] In his poem "Notes on Visitations" he admitted that his own poems were inspired by visitations from the Gods, or an involuntary surge of spiritual and creative energy.[51] This view was applied, moreover, to all English poetry: "The writing of English poetry," Woodcock declared, "is essentially a romantic exercise, depending on intuition and feeling, on catching the suggestive alternations of words, far more than it does on intellectual construction."[52]

In his Thomas Merton: Monk and Poet (1978) the leitmotif was the commingling of the religious and aesthetic impulses in Merton's writing.[53] The biography's climax was

Merton's moment of revelation at the Buddhist site of Pollonnaruwa in Ceylon. Just a few weeks before his death, Merton had a vision that was both aesthetic and spiritual, when he gazed upon two gigantic rock Buddhas standing in a shallow natural amphitheatre.[54] Musing upon the difficulty of chronicling such mystical experiences, Woodcock revealed his own belief in the Romantic role of the poet as seer. "The best accounts are written," he asserted, "not by theologians but by poets, whose power lies in penetrating to a deeper reality by abandoning the literalness of appearance and yet using its suggestive power."[55]

While these concerns made Woodcock a Romantic critic, he eschewed certain Romantic attitudes that had become au courant in modern literature. The notion of the hierarchy of literary forms was, he maintained, a "neo-romantic doctrine" that sought "to isolate certain literary forms and set them apart from and above the rest under the title of 'creative writing,' as if other categories, such as history and biography and criticism, were not also in their own ways creative."[56] He found Leonard Cohen's Beautiful Losers to be marred by a stylized decadence verging on solipsism.[57] Malcolm Lowry's Dark as the Grave Wherein my Friend is Laid was, Woodcock felt, sterile in its self-reflective literariness, and flawed by the influence of "solipsistic attitudes prevalent in modern European literature, which in their turn stem from the nineteenth-century romantic cult of the artist."[58] In a fine essay, he argued cogently that Irving Layton's doggerel verses and throw-away poems resulted from his Romantic posturings as the convention-flouting clown and the prophet who could not edit his Muse.[59]

These depredations on Romantic assumptions were, however, isolated and unconcerted; Woodcock remained apparently unaware of the Romantic nature of his own critical principles. In this confused and fragmentary rebellion against Romantic values Woodcock was in the company of many modern critics, who have been too thoroughly steeped in the pervasive Romantic thought of their time to be diligent in extirpating its premises. Most modernist authors and critics have been unable to recognize that Modernism was not an abnegation of Romanticism, but an extension of it - as a brief digression will show.

During the Romantic period art was dispossessed of its function of making discursive, rational, and common-sense propositions about life. Romantic artists derided the ascendant values of science and the middle class. They dissociated art from useful purpose and objective reason, claiming that the artist's responsibility was not to expound certain beliefs but to represent them in a form that was organic or symbolic, and therefore could not be paraphrased. The Romantic retreat from the "criticism of life" into the autonomy of the creative imagination was perpetuated in Modernist and "Postmodernist" attitudes, as Gerald Graff has argued:

> The definition of literature as a nondiscursive, nonconceptual mode of communication has been proposed in a great variety of forms, closed, open, and mixed. It is a continuous impulse from the beginnings of romanticism to the latest postmodernisms. From Coleridge and his German predecessors to recent formalists there runs a common theory of art as a _symbol_ that contains or "presents" its meanings intransitively, by contrast with discursive _signs_ or concepts, which make statements "about" external states of affairs.[60]

Though T.S. Eliot posed as the spokesman for a neo-classical verse, he accepted the Romantic view that art is not to express meanings about the real world. "_If_ poetry is a form of 'communication'," he wrote, "yet that which is to be communicated is the poem itself, and only incidentally the experience and the thought which have gone into it."[61] Eliot argued that the meaning of a poem serves only to keep the reader's mind "diverted and quiet, while the poem does its work upon him: much as the imaginary burglar is always provided with a bit of nice meat for the house-dog."[62] In attempting to save poetry from rational dissection and didacticism, Eliot made it a mute symbol, an autotelic art.[63]

Another unwitting Romantic was T.E. Hulme, who in his _Speculations_ (1924) posed as one of the Modernist vanguard, dismantling outworn Romantic ideas. Hulme fulminated against pantheism for having brought ethical and spiritual values down into the human sphere, describing Romanticism as "spilt religion."[64] Yet when he insisted upon "exact description" of the feeling as the criterion of great art he anticipated the Imagist's view of the poem as "concrete" Image, embodying the feeling whole without the obstruction of thought. Hulme's Intensive Manifold was to be known only through the poet's intuition, making poetry an intuitive statement of feeling, and not a rational comment on the real world. Though he warned against Romantic vagueness in language and sublimity in poetry, Hulme's artist was really the Romantic seer with a distaste for linguistic imprecision.

Wyndham Lewis was another self-divided Romantic. Lewis attacked the Romantic withdrawal from the real world in refuting Alfred North Whitehead's attempt, in his Science and the Modern World (1925), to reconcile art and science by his theory of organic mechanism.[65] Whitehead regretted that scientists and philosophers had come to see the material world as dead soulless matter, and urged them to derive a new sense of nature's vitality from the truths of Romantic poetry. Lewis recognized astutely in his Time and Western Man (1927) that Whitehead had abandoned a common-sense apprehension of the objective world.[66] Yet it was precisely this subjective detachment that Lewis endorsed in his Vorticism; the Vorticist artist was equipped to know truth by a means far different from common sense, and the images he created - those "radiant nodes and clusters, from which and through which, and into which, ideas are constantly rushing" - were, as Frank Kermode noted, "the images the Romantic poet has always sought."[67]

This Romantic conception of art as anti-discursive image or symbol meant that art did not make statements about reality, but, as in I.A. Richards' theory, offered "pseudo-statements."[68] Richards argued that, since poetic emotions could not be grounded in objective fact, we must cut our literary works "free from belief, and yet retain them, in this released state, as the main instruments by which we order our attitudes to one another and the world."[69] This intellectual legerdemain did not explain, however, how poetry could help to engender a set of common values if it did not assert beliefs but merely dramatized what it is like to have them.

Woodcock was far from alone, therefore, in derogating certain Romantic ideas while holding an underlying Romantic view of literature. In Canada Woodcock found, moreover, the same equivocal relation between Modernist criticism and Romantic thought. In The White Savannahs (1936) W.E. Collin promoted Eliot's "unity of sensibility" and the evocation of the spirit of the age through myth, and advocated the "dry, hard, classical" language of Imagism for Canadian poets. Yet Collin's main interest was in the poet's emotions; in a later review he defined poetry as "an inner experience wearing a garment of words."[70] His method was to re-create this emotional experience by entering imaginatively into the mind of the poet, using his Modernist terminology in the affective and impressionistic manner dictated by the expressive theory. He spoke of "passing through" the poet's sensibility:

> ...a man who passes through Verlaine may come out dripping with ghostly melancholy; but a mind that passes through Eliot comes out equipped with intellectual symbols, hungering for an absolute. The symbols are not yellow but crisp and hard and do not drip.[71]

A.J.M. Smith was also a Romantic impressionist armed with a Modernist vocabulary. To the hackneyed signs of the affective fallacy - "music," "gnomic strength," "power" - he added new phrases such as "the classical virtues of restraint and precision," "calm and classical style," "correctness of form," and "a precision and clarity, an exactness of description."[72] Though these were putative descriptions of the formal aspects of poetry, they in fact offered only another kind of emotional impression. While Smith affected a disdain for Romantic values in celebrating the intelligence and usefulness of poetry, he supported those values by exalting a "pure poetry" which was "unconcerned with anything save its own existence."[73] This was merely a surrogate of Eliot's autotelic art: emotion or intuition bodied forth in words and closed off from rational analysis.

Considering the influence of Romantic ideas upon modern critics in both England and Canada,[74] it is not surprising that Woodcock prevaricated in his rebellion against Romanticism. There was, moreover, a profound affinity between Woodcock's critical approach and his anarchism. Romanticism and anarchism share beliefs in visionary quests, in communion with nature, in attainment of greater self-knowledge in preparation for social change, and in the kind of society that ensures the greatest individual development, self-expression, and freedom. At the heart of anarchism is what T.E. Hulme identified correctly as "the root of all Romanticism: that man, the individual, is an infinite reservoir of possibilities; and if you can so rearrange society by the destruction of oppressive order then these possibilities will have a chance."[75]

Contrary to the Romantic-anarchist view that man is innately good and order a negative conception, Hulme saw man as limited and imperfect, burdened by evil and Original Sin, and capable of improvement only through the ethical discipline enforced by political and religious institutions. This outlook was akin to the conservative attitudes of Thomas Hobbes and Edmund Burke, and was directly opposed to Herbert Read's anarchist celebration of the Romantic spirit in art and society. Read declared:

> There is a principle of life, of creation, of liberation, and that is the romantic spirit; there is a principle of order, of control and of repression, and that is the classical spirit. Naturally there is some purpose in the latter principle - the instincts are curbed in the service of some particular

> ideal or set of values; but on analysis it always resolves into the defence of some particular structure of society, the perpetuation of the rule of some particular class.[76]

In The Stream and the Source (1972), Woodcock pointed out that for Read Romanticism was "the aesthetic basis of a libertarian ethic," the foundation of his conviction that "the connections between art and the revolutionary impulse were intimate and vital."[77] Read adopted Bergson's idea that the creative urge propels human evolution in the direction of deepening consciousness, and asserted that "the only way in which we can bring about a moral improvement in society is by first effecting an aesthetic improvement."[78] In Education through Art (1942) and The Grass Roots of Art (1955) Read propounded an aesthetic training of sensibility as the best method of preparing for an anarchist society.[79] Harking back to the ideas of Morris, Kropotkin, and Ruskin he claimed that all work would be creative in the ideal society; "Rhythm and harmony would pervade all that we do and all that we make; in this sense every man would be an artist of some kind."[80]

It is difficult to establish the extent of Woodcock's agreement with Read, the man who inspired his conversion to anarchism in 1941. At the very least, there is no doubt that Woodcock shared his mentor's acceptance of the revelatory power of Romantic art. In identifying the aesthetic with the mystical impulse, and in confessing that his poetry sprang from "visitations" of the gods, Woodcock concurred with Read's Romantic view of art as a "system of revelation."[81] Read was a proselyte of Romanticism as a "philosophy of immanence," the only one to emerge since the end of the Middle Ages.[82] For Read, Romanticism was the apogee of English literary history, exploding the aberrant tradition of eighteenth-century wit-writing, re-establishing contact with the heritage of Chaucer, Milton, and Shakespeare, and, he recorded perspicaciously, finding further expression in Imagism and surrealism.[83]

"Everything Woodcock has written shows," as Peter Hughes stated, "that in formulating 'libertarian socialism' the truth of art is the best introduction to anarchist politics."[84] In other words, Woodcock's writings have embodied Read's belief in aesthetic education, expressing what Woodcock called "the conception of revolution by change of heart that has haunted for centuries at least one current of the libertarian tradition, that which runs from seventeenth-century Winstanley, through Godwin and Tolstoy, to Gandhi in our own age."[85] Woodcock's entire oeuvre is a sedulous iteration of anarchist ideals; in rebelling against the neo-romantic hierarchy of literary forms, he has expanded Shelley's definition of the poet as "unacknowledged legislator" to include the biographer, travel-writer, social historian, dramatist, and critic.

Yet anarchism is not the brainchild of Romanticism;

Woodcock has shown that the roots of anarchism go back to the seventeenth century, that much of Godwin's thought was of the Enlightenment in character, and that Proudhon was vociferously anti-Romantic. He has pointed out, in fact, that Rousseau's social contract led "down the steep path to revolutionary authoritarianism."[86] Yet he admitted that anarchism inherited Rousseau's "romantic stress on spontaneity, his idea of education as a drawing out of what is latent in the child so that the natural instincts for good are developed, and his sense of the primitive virtues," adding that "the whole of the anarchist viewpoint is neatly summed up in one phrase of Rousseau: 'Man was born free and is everywhere in chains!'."[87]

Peter Hughes observed correctly that Woodcock was attracted to "that anarchic and visionary rebellion we find in Blake and Shelley found in Godwin."[88] Hughes was wrong, however, in surmising that this was "the one strand of Romanticism" Woodcock admired, and that the Romantic attitude in general seemed to repel him. The source of his error was the misconception that Woodcock's writing expressed only the eighteenth-century view of literature as statement and persuasion, which had become de rigueur once again in the nineteen-thirties. This polemical emphasis, Hughes maintained, obliterated "romantic distinctions between the dreary truths of life and the golden lies of art."[89] Yet Woodcock was a polemicist with a difference, for a part of his sensibility was shaped by the aestheticism of the twenties and the decadence of the Nineties.

When Edmund Wilson proclaimed in Axel's Castle (1931) that "the private imagination in isolation from the life of society seems to have been exploited and explored as far as for the moment is possible,"[90] Woodcock was an apprentice poet of nineteen. He was soon to discover the starkness of Imagism, and to find a vehicle for his emotions and perceptions in more discursive verse, but meanwhile he was held in thrall by Axel. In 1932 he published what he called two "impeccably traditional" poems in the eclectic pages of A.R. Orage's New English Weekly. The opening lines of one contained the ornate diction and archaic affectations of pre-Raphaelite poetry at its worst:

> 'Tis even, day's dark requiem,
>   The grey gnats dance a rigadoon,
> And Venus, like a pendant gem,
>   Hangs from the girdle of the moon...[91]

In his Six Poems of 1938 Woodcock published another exercise in the same vein; note the mellifluous and overly alliterative diction of "Champs Elysées," and, once again, the enchanting presence of the moon:

> Pale in pellucid portals, numb of night,
>   Mild moon, mauve maculate, brims her curse of fear,
> Scatters the fledgling angels of the stars
>   And, cleaving cloud spume, swings the hemisphere.[92]

These tawdrily derivative poems were omitted from subsequent volumes of verse, and Woodcock later admitted that rereading the first poem, "Nocturne," evoked "the flavour of sackcloth and ashes."[93] Yet the poems heralded a decadent strain in Woodcock's writing, which appeared next in the languid sense of doom or ennui and the overwrought metaphors of some poems of the forties. The watcher from "the castled mind" was repulsed by the sight of corpses floating like "bodied memories" in "The Green Moat of Time,"[94] while "Song" depicted the dog of time rooting in "brain's damp earth."[95] In "Windows" a lover saw with horror the age's images of death reflected in the eyes of his femme fatale,[96] and "Poem" contained what Woodcock called "an almost surrealistic image of that time of death."[97] At her funeral a dead girl was described as having "ideas in her hair," her breasts being "devastated domes" beneath whose "soft shelter/ we had our dreams."[98]

Motifs of decadence continued to interest Woodcock throughout his poetic career, finding expression next in the early sixties, in two verse dramas for CBC radio. When Al Purdy heard Maskerman broadcast on CBC Stage on August 28, 1960, he wrote the playwright a note admiring its "decadent sadness, a quite deliberate over-ripeness."[99] Woodcock acknowledged later that this was precisely the tone he had sought to create.[100] Maskerman, a television cameraman, obtained a divorce by providing the court with films and tapes of his wife's adulteries. Six months later he married his mistress, Jacquetta, but fifteen months afterward she in turn sought a divorce, for Maskerman's love had been recaptured by his first wife, Maria. Both women possessed the "mask" of the Lorelei, and when Maskerman sought a brief escape from his harried life by taking a bus trip to a coastal resort, he encountered the siren again in the person of the tour guide, Lore. He met his nemesis when she invited him to swim in her favourite bay; before plunging to his death in the unseen whirlpool, Maskerman described her ironically as "my destiny/ and my destination."[101]

Maskerman's dilemma was that of the decadent artist, locked within his dream world and beguiled by his own image of female beauty; the play focused on this self-destructive enchantment through a stylized plot, suggestive poetic diction, and the abandonment of realistic detail in favour of the preternatural. The play was part of a change that overcame radio drama in the late fifties and early sixties when, Woodcock recalled, plays ceased to imitate the visual realism of television or the theatre, appealing instead to the mind's ear, exploring sound itself as a stimulus to the imagination.[102] This meant stressing the sounds of words, and evoking the supernatural to convey regions of perception outside the visual world. These plays tended, in Woodcock's words, "to surge from dreams and memories and to operate in that inner territory of the mind which lies between the subliminal and the conscious."[103]

The same techniques were used in The Floor of the Night (Midweek Theatre; July 21, 1965) to portray a man's inner struggle between vanity and truth, his choice between a decadent and self-deluding hermitude and an active quest for identity in the real world.[104] Lawrence Goldsmith had made a fortune quickly by directing western films in Hollywood, but, realizing that he had created only "a world of shoddy shams for other men," retreated with a coterie of clever and youthful hangers-on to his late father's estate. "The Maze," as it was called, was sealed off from the world until Lawrence's neighbours, through flattery and cajolery, convinced him to host their society's annual garden party. His young friends concocted a plan to "amaze" the rustics and draw out their foibles, but when the locals discovered that Goldsmith's entourage had spread malicious gossip about them, they resolved to sue him through lawyers' letters.

Deserted by most of his following, Lawrence was forced to acknowledge his "bestial drifting" and "cretinous self-display," admitting that he was the Minotaur "wandering in the maze, deluded." His crisis of identity was brought to a climax when the young actress, Pearl, tore off his dark glasses, removing the mask of the Minotaur. Pearl had loved Lawrence because of the chivalric virtues of his films; in his withdrawal he had thought these virtues false, but finally he decided to go with Pearl to test them in the world. Goldsmith was another paradigm of the decadent artist; like a good smith, he had forged the golden lies of art, but realized that the richess they brought would be valueless until he attained the integrity to live by his artistic vision.

Another decadent figure appeared in Anima, or Swann Grown Old (1977), a cycle of poems conveying an almost mystical quietism before the inscrutable ambiguities of the heart. In many of these poems Swann, the morose, self-pitying hero of Proust's Du Côté du chez Swann, recalled his innocent belief that his love was the embodiment of his anima, and confessed his chagrin in old age that he had spent his life with a woman he did not know, who was not his type.[105] Like Maskerman, Swann realized the chimerical nature of his love. In the climactic poem of the cycle, "The Emptied-Out Heart," he recognized that all the gradations of love had been merely "a fool's ladder/ to nowhere."[106] Having lost his illusions, but aware that his heart would return to longing and refill with folly, he turned to see the spring sky lit by "the clear/ white light of hopelessness" that was the beginning of wisdom.

On several occasions Woodcock acknowledged the decadent strain in his poetry. Anima, he admitted, was "pure Romanticism."[107] In Leonard Cohen's poetry he found "the decadence that is implicit in all romanticism," adding that "I am not using the word decadence in its pejorative sense; I could hardly do so, since it is an inclination evident in many of my own poems."[108] Writing about John Glassco's fiction, Woodcock commented that this kind of writing was unpopular in modern times because the decadent writer, by creating his own world impossible of realization, turned his back on "that cult of the possible and the progressive which has consumed our age."[109] This penchant for decadence may seem incongruous in a polemical writer dedicated to social change, but, as Woodcock explained, anarchism itself was a rebellion against "the possible and the progressive," being more concerned with dreams and ideals. Especially in the forties, Woodcock embraced anarchism as a retreat from the horrors of political reality, a sublime and contemplative philosophy that offered some private lebensraum wherein a passionate faith in political ideals could survive. In later years he insisted that anarchist ideals be adapted and applied to the practical world, but his belief in anarchism as a powerful myth retained, to a considerable degree, the character of a decadent refuge from an imperfect world.

Another Romantic aspect of Woodcock's polemical orientation was his quest, in his intellectual biographies, for the nucleus of idea and belief in his subjects' works and lives - a quest which, as Richard Altick recorded in his Lives and Letters, "has marked every generation since romanticism began in earnest its quest for the creator behind the creation."[110] This biographical approach was concomitant with the Romantic interest in art as an expression of personality, which replaced the Enlightenment view of art as artifact, as Altick observed: "Literature, ceasing to be simply a library of writings, became the sum of the living images of the authors who had created it - a landscape now populated with figures. For better or worse, biography and criticism became inseparable."[111] In general Woodcock's focus upon ideas rather than personal traits saved him from the sensational aspects of personality-description; however, his assiduous search for the author behind the works marked him as a Romantic biographer and critic.

In his literary criticism as in his anarchist social criticism Woodcock took a personal stance. He started Canadian Literature in 1959 with a determination to avoid the pitfalls of group editing which he had experienced during the forties, and with a belief that "a journal is as much a personal creation as a book."[112] Every page reflected the editor's interest in the writer and the writer's milieu. His empathetic kind of criticism was based, moreover, upon a self-declared personal interest in various authors, regardless of their respective places in the established canon of Canadian literature. "A degree of empathy, or, more rarely, an obvious opposition of viewpoint" was necessary, he admitted, before he could discuss an author in a meaningful way.[113] As a result, prominent authors such as Robertson Davies and Alice Munro went unconsidered, while Woodcock did not hesitate to treat the works of personal friends like Roderick Haig-Brown, Al Purdy, David Watmough, Ethel Wilson, Margaret Laurence, and Earle Birney "in a different tone" from that used in "the more formally critical pieces."[114]

To some extent this personal approach meant that Woodcock's critical attention was concentrated on two groups of writers: first, those who like himself had immigrated to Canada from England, such as Wilson, Watmough, Haig-Brown, Malcolm Lowry, and Wyndham Lewis; and second, those who inhabited his own adopted region of British Columbia, including the first four of the above five plus Earle Birney, Pat Lowther, and Jack Hodgins.[115] One should not make too much of these concatenations, however, for Woodcock's eclectic curiosity also led him to write about Irving Layton and A.J.M. Smith, A.M. Klein, Leonard Cohen, Mordecai Richler, Mavis Gallant, Marie-Claire Blais, Hugh MacLennan, and Morley Callaghan, amongst others. Perhaps more than any other Canadian critic, he has elucidated our literature's diverse cultural contexts, from David Adams Richards' depiction of Lives of Short Duration along the Miramichi River in northern New Brunswick[116] to Samuel Hearne's account, in his Journey to the Northern Ocean (1795), of his trek with an Indian band across the tundra of the Barren Land.[117]

While Woodcock's honesty about his personal preferences was commendable, he succumbed too often to that "mutual kindliness" which he himself decried as a consequence of the insularity of the Canadian literary world.[118] The cause of good criticism was ill-served by his statement that Margaret Laurence had created "a series of portraits of her own sex as stimulating as those of Jane Austen, if different in kind."[119] The encomium was meaningless, for we were not told how Laurence's characters were stimulating in a way different from Austen's, nor shown why this made them great fictional creations. Equally pointless was the suggestion that Laurence, like Tolstoy, portrayed lost times and worlds,[120] for it ignored the immense differences between the two novelists. This technique of praise by association also went too far in Woodcock's comments that David Watmough's reminiscent monodramas were, in their own way, as "monumental" as Proust's great novel cycle,[121] and that Roblin Lake, the "watery omphalos" of Al Purdy's poetic universe, might one day become the Canadian equivalent of Walden Pond.[122]

Woodcock's kindliness extended not only toward his friends, but toward a great many struggling writers. His criticism exhibited a persistent indulgence in salubrious description, often in the form of carefully proscribed definitions of greatness. This gambit ran rampant in his survey of the poetry of the sixties for The Literary History of Canada: he found that Tom Wayman wrote Canada's "best radically oriented poetry," while Raymond Souster was "the most naturally populist of all Canadian poets," and Roy Daniells' sonnets were "the most accomplished adaptations of a traditional form."[123] The most grandiose of this profusion of superlatives was the claim that the best Canadian poets of the sixties were "fine poets by any standard of excellence, fine in vision and craft alike."[124] The proposition was not only wildly adulatory but too general, for Woodcock failed to explain how the poetry met *his* standards of excellence.

Critical evaluation was also hindered by Woodcock's sense of obligation to provide historical accounts of our literary past and journalistic surveys of current publications. In his 1977 reflections upon his eighteen-year editorship of *Canadian Literature*, he hoped that the magazine had accomplished "its everyday task of presenting a running commentary on Canadian writing and literary scholarship."[125] Unimpressed by the several critical anthologies of articles culled from the journal's pages, he preferred to see its issues as "a sensitive chronicle, a kind of ongoing history for anyone who cares to study it, of the extraordinary changes that have taken place in writing and in the ambience in which writers work."[126] This compilation of a running commentary or ongoing history was also carried on during the sixties, Woodcock recorded, by the *University of Toronto Quarterly*'s "Letters in Canada" supplement. Throughout the decade the two quarterlies noticed "every book of verse that appeared, with the exception of a few obviously talentless vanity publications,"[127] until in 1971 the burgeoning of Canadian literature forced Woodcock to renegue his 1959 guarantee of a review for every book of poems that landed on his desk.

A good part of Woodcock's contribution to the "sensitive chronicle" was a series of _aperçus_ containing fleeting impressions and cursory judgements but not well-documented critical analyses. These appreciations were couched in the metaphorical display and sententious phrasing of the literary marketplace. Woodcock stated that Robert McNamara's poetry had a "classic (not classicist) quality" and that McNamara was "one of our best minor poets, in form and key."[128] He did not explain why McNamara was a good poet but not a major one, nor did he specify what was meant by the unusual terms "classic" and "key." The same ponderous vacuity was apparent in Woodcock's remarks that Earle Birney had "chameleon voices," that Irving Layton's poetic gifts were "constantly boiling like certain thermal pools," that Dennis Lee wrote a "vigorous kind of running verse," and that Miriam Waddington looked "with a clear eye on the meaning of existence and her very self."[129]

The preoccupation with a running commentary on emerging Canadian literature led Woodcock to neglect the literary tradition, making only glancing remarks about entire periods and genres. "Technical proficiency may begin with these writers," he wrote of the Confederation poets, "but the first really original presence among English Canadian poets is still E.J. Pratt."[130] This statement was at odds with an earlier recognition of the "independent perception" of the Confederation poets,[131] and was offered as a self-evident truth, without further explanation of the imitative nature of Confederation poetry or of Pratt's originality. Similarly, Woodcock felt it unnecessary to demonstrate his theories that the Canadian novel had developed from a nineteenth century realism to a twentieth century romanticism dominated by myth and fantasy,[132] or that poets who write in long lines are linear thinkers with a strong sense of history while those who use short lines are discontinuous thinkers and "eternal moment men."[133]

Another impediment to the task of evaluation in Woodcock's criticism was his belief that Canadian literature was simply immature, not yet ready to be compared with the best works of much older countries. He shared this attitude with other prominent Canadian critics. E.K. Brown cautioned in 1948 that "in writing of recent contemporary poets it is much wiser to make sure that one's interpretation is adequate than to press on to judgement."[134] Northrop Frye also believed that Canadian works should be interpreted but not evaluated, and Woodcock concurred, stating in 1971 that "the exercise of evaluating books, of comparing them with the best the language has produced, must always be a hopeless task in a country like Canada whose literature is young and still in the process of formation."[135]

The notion that description or interpretation could be separated from evaluation was, in practice, a fallacious assumption, for it is very difficult to make any analysis of a work of literature without implying a judgement of it. In many instances, Woodcock managed to make non-evaluative comparisons between Canadian and other works, but these comments remained descriptive mainly because they were so brief and superficial. He noted some similarities of theme and plot between Richler's The Incomparable Atuk and Voltaire's L'Ingénu, and between Earle Birney's Turvey and Jaroslav Hasek's The Good Soldier Schweik, remarking that in some of his prose passages Morley Callaghan "might easily be mistaken for Hemingway," and that A.J.M. Smith's poetry shared a "slight rococo tang" with that of Yeats and the Sitwells.[136]

Yet (to adapt one of Gertrude Stein's bons mots) remarks are not criticism, and Woodcock, being a serious critic, could not restrict all of his comparisons to this fleeting descriptive commentary; he was compelled to ignore his own dictum and to press on to judgement. He noted correctly that the characters in Matt Cohen's The Colours of War were to be understood as ideas on legs, like Orwell's O'Brien or Swift's King of Brobdingnag, and clarified the novel's tone by a comparison with Voltaire's Candide:

> Theodore (the novel's hero) is in fact a kind of latter-day Candide, set to wander as an innocent through the man-made jungles of the present, and to find that all the promises of the future are illusory in comparison with the rediscovery of roots and of Matt Cohen's wry equivalent of Voltaire's cultivation of one's garden. Despite appearances, it is, as Voltaire's was, a counsel of defiance rather than defeat, of life continuing in its tenacious way in the ruin of social order and of political idealism.[137]

This kind of description cleared the way for proper evaluation, for Woodcock pointed out that Cohen's theme was not merely the one-dimensional celebration of innocence or satire of political corruption, and that his characters were not intended to be realistic creations.

More directly judgemental was Woodcock's contention that Mordecai Richler was an "impure satirist" because he had not only "that relentless moralism, that pitiless and paranoic rectitude which allowed Swift and Lewis to create monsters as credible as men"[138] but also a strong sympathy for his all-too-human characters. This insistence upon the classical definition of satire as untinctured by sympathy was narrowly dogmatic on Woodcock's part. It was balanced, however, by a cogent comparison; Woodcock argued that Richler is best understood as a novelist in the Balzacian sense, highly aware of "the interplay between an individual's will and the social and historical imperatives that bear upon him."[139] The Canadian reader would learn more about his society from Richler's novels, Woodcock added parenthetically, than he would from "the more self-consciously tendentious models of Canada Today that have been created by Hugh MacLennan."[140]

The best and most enduring of Woodcock's criticisms of Canadian literature have consisted of such direct evaluations. While Romantic critical assumptions too often reduced his comments on poetry to mere impressionism, he has made some very astute analyses of fiction. In keeping with his deliberately idiosyncratic critical approach (or, to put it in less felicitous terms, with his habitual inconsistency between critical theory and practice), Woodcock has done his best work not on the writer's relation to his cultural milieu, but on the aesthetic strengths and weaknesses of specific texts. By not being confined to the bailiwick of the "public critic," and by invading the domain of the textual critic, he has made invaluable contributions to Canadian criticism.[141]

One of these was his perceptive and balanced evaluation of Hugh MacLennan's novels. While admitting that MacLennan's fictional treatment of Canadian history and identity made him our most important novelist of the forties and fifties, Woodcock showed that the novels were marred by one-dimensional characters, contrived endings, an awkward shyness about sex, didacticism, and sketchy cultural analyses.[142] He also delineated the myth of Ulysses as the structural paradigm in several of MacLennan's novels.[143] A more recent and lesser known but equally cogent examination of patterns of imagery in fiction was his argument that Margaret Laurence's four Manawaka novels are pervaded respectively by images of earth, air, fire, and water, and that the characters of their heroines are derived from the ancient theory of the four humours.[144]

As seen in his comments on Matt Cohen's The Colours of War, Woodcock has done valuable work in discerning accurately the tone and theme of particular works, and thereby preventing evaluations based upon the wrong premises. Two good examples are his corrections of Edmund Wilson's appreciative but superficial readings of Morley Callaghan and Marie-Claire Blais. He pointed out that Callaghan was not, as Wilson had argued, "a naturalistic writer to be discussed in terms of psychological probability," but "a writer of parables in the moralist tradition which often deliberately flout the demands of plausibility."[145] Despite his praise for the book, Wilson had been wrong in describing Marie-Claire Blais' A Season in the Life of Emmanuel as a realistic and "unpleasant picture" of rural life in Quebec, Woodcock asserted; the novel was, rather, a transmutation of elements of the real world into the realm of autonomous fantasy.[146]

One of the great aids to Woodcock's critical task of evaluation was his reluctance to employ proscriptively his regionalist and pluralist vision of Canadian culture as a means of defining our literary tradition. He carefully avoided imposing any notion of the "Canadianness" of our literature, preferring to respect the integrity of the individual authors and works. This stance did involve, however, another of his characteristic discrepancies between critical theory and practice. Though in 1955 he uttered a rallying cry for Canadian critics to "expound the tradition" - "not the literary tradition solely, but the whole cultural complex," he made no attempt then or later to trace what he called the "regional pattern" of our literary and cultural development.[147] On the contrary, he sought to dispel what he called "the ominous suggestion of national feeling" in the phrase "a Canadian literary tradition."[148] Eleven years later he maintained the same ambivalence on the question of national identity, agreeing with A.J.M. Smith that "a compact and self-contained literary tradition" had emerged; yet he offered only hints that it consisted of a great variety of form and content inspired by the country's regionalist and pluralist diversity.[149] The word "regional" was used advisedly to emphasize the fact that "Canadian writers still belong within the greater tradition of Anglo-Saxon literature and have to establish a place there as individuals." and to avoid the connotations of uniformity of the adjective "national."[150]

As an anarchist, Woodcock was repulsed by the upsurge of Canadian nationalism that occurred during the sixties, and took pains to dissociate himself from it. In so doing he went to the extreme of negating his own insistence that the Canadian critic should elucidate the peculiarly "Canadian" quality of our literature. Lashing out against "the trap of narrow nationalism," he declared rather recklessly that "The study of Canadian literature is merely the study of writers who happen to live and work in Canada."[151] This was, however, a lapse from his more judicious and balanced view that the critic must consider tradition not only in its national but also in its regional and international aspects. Tradition consists, he argued, of the writer's evocation of "his own place and time" and of "the continual and necessary interplay" of broader cultural currents.[152] In 1976 Woodcock concluded that this vital interplay of traditions was expressed in our poetry as a dichtomy between Canadian content and international form. He spoke of two ways of defining a canon of Canadian poetry:

> One lies in understanding the effort in successive poets to give expression to that combination in experience of setting and society, filtered through the individual sensibility, which is the material of Canadian culture as it is of any other. The other is to treat the matter in a much more closely aesthetic way and to see tradition in terms of form and technique, a view which inevitably takes us outside the Canadian setting, since the more closely concerned Canadian poets have become with formal values, the more likely they have been to be attached to traditions that are more than national.[153]

This was an accurate estimation, for to this day Canadian poetry has not yet fostered its own formal movement, while it has developed a nexus of themes and concerns. Milton Wilson recognized this fact in 1959 when he wrote of our poetry that "The bricks are homemade, even if the design is not."[154]

In combatting the perversion of critical judgement by nationalistic feeling, Woodcock was fighting something that had been problematic since the beginnings of Canadian criticism in the late nineteenth century. For the past hundred years, nationalistic critics have felt it their duty to discover an expression of the nation's identity in its fledgling literature, and thereby to impart a purpose and a sense of direction to both the literature and the nation. They despised the "colonial mentality" of those who accepted British or American critical standards, and were opposed by the internationalists, who argued that the xenophobic obsession with national identity was a patriotic enslavement; it must suffice to recount one skirmish in this war of generations. In his Introduction to The Book of Canadian Poetry (1943) A.J.M. Smith praised the "cosmopolitan" poets who transcended the "colonialism" of native poetry by accepting the ideas of Eliot and Yeats.[155] John Sutherland answered Smith in his Introduction to Other Canadians (1947), arguing that Canadian poetry was colonial precisely because it was written by people who looked to England for their poetic models, and were therefore "out of touch with a people who long ago began adjusting themselves to life on this continent."[156]

Sutherland's concern was, however, not with the country but with the continent. He proposed that the proletarian "Brooklyn bum self" of Whitman was the real Canadian self, and that our poetic leaders should be the American Imagists. This was clearly a substitution of American for English imperialism, and a perpetuation of a colonial mentality. The attitude persisted, moreover, in more recent criticism. Paul West argued that the Whitmanish mode with its "barbaric yawp, rambling exposition, and asymmetrical shape" was "suited to the essentially Canadian manner of utterance."[157] R.L. McDougall regretted that Canadian literature would always lack a national symbol because the Americans had invented the only myth apposite for the continent some centuries ago - "the Adamite myth and the ideology of democratic egalitarianism."[158] In his Butterfly on Rock (1970) D.G. Jones insisted that the Canadian author must learn to affirm both self and nature by achieving that mystical vision of communion with the universe that has dominated American poetry from Walt Whitman to Gary Snyder.[159]

Woodcock had little patience with Jones and other critics who, riding on the crest of a wave of Canadian nationalism, sought to impose a national myth upon our literature. Butterfly on Rock and Margaret Atwood's Survival provided, he claimed, "highly distorted views of Canadian literature" if taken as pictures of the whole, though both books contained brilliant insights on specific works and authors.[160] Woodcock doubted Atwood's theory that Canadian literature is pervaded by the sombre theme of grim survival, suggesting that a "temperamental inclination" had led Atwood "a long part of the way toward her conclusions."[161] He argued cogently that Survival was primarily a work of self-examination, a reduction to rational terms of the defensive strength and quiet tenacity that found a figurative expression in Atwood's poems and novels.[162] While he found the theories of Atwood and Jones too ptolemaic, he observed quite correctly that Frank Davey's dichotomy of writers who were "pro-life" and "anti-life" was too general to be useful.[163]

Though he has not commented on the book, one would assume that Woodcock would be doubly critical of Paul Cappon's In our Own House: Social Perspectives on Canadian Literature (1978), which combined ardent nationalism with dogmatic Marxism. Cappon promised that his sociology of Canadian literature would "criticize writers in terms of the impact which their writing has on changing society rather than on subjective aesthetic values in isolation."[164] It was a Marxist prescription for a Canadian literature of social change that demonstrated the sociologist's distrust of - and superficial understanding of - the subjective nature of the critical endeavour. With this doctrinaire approach, Cappon was ill equipped to appreciate Woodcock's ambivalence about Canadian identity and his eclectic view of tradition. "What Woodcock and other internationalists are saying," he asserted, " is that Canadian writers must cut themselves off from their concrete material roots in order to meet the standards of the 'greater tradition.'"[165] As we have seen, Woodcock believed that the critic should clarify both the writer's involvement in his native cultural milieu and his participation in broader currents of thought. For Cappon this was neither a well-balanced view nor a valid defense of the critic's independence(which he could comprehend only as a delusion borne of our liberalist ethos); therefore, he riposted by tarring Woodcock with the brush of internationalism. This was exactly the kind of programmatic and obscurantist thinking that had repulsed Woodcock when he encountered it in Marxist critics of the thirties.

In his deliberate ambivalence about the quest for a Canadian national myth Woodcock was in the company of a few other dissenting critics. E.K. Brown had been equally cautious in his famous On Canadian Poetry (1943), asserting that "A great literature is the flowering of a great society, a vital and adequate society," but declining to comment on what would impart that vital élan to Canadian society and literature.[166] Miriam Waddington, in her "Canadian Tradition and Canadian Literature," showed the same doubts as Woodcock about the delineation of proscriptive thematic patterns in our literature. She rejected a series of thematic dualities advanced by other critics, including A.J.M. Smith's native and cosmopolitan traditions, F.W. Watt's twin literatures of colonial conservatism and dissenting radicalism, J.P. Mathews' academic and folk traditions, and Malcolm Ross's theory that the natural mode of Canadian expression was irony - "the inescapable response to the presence and pressures of opposites in tension."[167] The opposites and the tension, Waddington suggested, were mainly in the eye of the beholder; she herself could discover "no real Canadian tradition, but only a social matrix, an accumulation of historical events, full of contradictions, forces, and counter-forces."[168]

Throughout most of his career Woodcock has agreed with Waddington, with the added stipulation that the two very general guiding principles in the apparent randomness of Canadian culture were its regionalism and pluralism. He has carefully dissociated his literary from his social criticisms, though the latter have appeared regularly in the editorial pages of Canadian Literature, fulfilling the Arnoldian belief that the critic must combine the criticism of literature with the criticism of social life. From the first issue of the magazine, Woodcock took up this dual task of the public critic, commencing with his 1959 attack upon Canada's archaic censorship laws. Anarchist idealism informed his insistence that censorship of any kind was "unjustified and practically self-defeating."[169] He resisted other "pressures to restrict the freedom of expression and opinion,"[170] protesting the attempts by "arts administrators" of government grants to make artists pander to commercial and bureaucratic exigencies. "A healthy arts community," Woodcock asserted, "is surely the most anarchic community that could ever exist, based as it must be on the individuality of the creative artist."[171] This comment revealed both an anarchist faith in the individual and a fear that in supporting the arts the state would establish the criteria upon which its support was to be based.[172] The belief in decentralism found expression in Woodcock's hope that Canada's multiversities might be made into numerous small colleges whose functions could be integrated with the characters of their local communities,[173] and in his celebration of the regional variety of Canadian publishing. He praised the "vigorous regional presses" for their adventurous policies, and remarked that the survival of Hurtig Publishing in Edmonton augured well for the "possibility of a healthy decentralization in Canada's literary life."[174]

Though these were isolated comments, two recent publications have approached a definitive statement of the Canadian cultural and literary tradition, with consequences potentially detrimental to Woodcock's criticism. In The Meeting of Time and Space: Regionalism in Canadian Literature (1981) he argued that Canada has always consisted of a number of *patrias chicas*, its literature comprising seven distinct regional traditions: those of

Newfoundland, the other Maritime provinces, Quebec, Ontario, the three prairie provinces, British Columbia, and the North.[175] Woodcock exalted Montreal as Canada's one great intercultural community, regretting that Ottawa and Toronto had become "the foci of a political, economic, and cultural centralism" that went against the Canadian grain.[176] He launched a jeremiad about all organs of Canadian cultural centralism, including "openly centralized public corporations like the CBC and the National Film Board, and less overt centralized institutions like the Toronto publishing industry and the Ontario-based national magazines."[177]

Contiguous with this fuller elucidation of our cultural tradition was a greater emphasis on the evocation of regional and cultural traditions in Canadian literature. In certain passages of The World of Canadian Writing (1980) this emphasis assumed the weight of a criterion of excellence supervening all others. Woodcock admired Margaret Laurence's novels not only for artistic qualities but also for preserving "lost times and worlds" in their portrayals of rural and small-town Manitoban life.[178] He found A.M. Klein's way of suffusing his works with allusions to Jewish intellectual and cultural traditions was more important than the fulfillment of international standards of aesthetic achievement:

> I don't know about Klein's greatness, and I don't think greatness matters much in poetry. But I do think it matters to have written a good work of symbolic

> fiction and a few poems that are excellent, and to have given a renewed expression to the traditions to which one belongs.[179]

It would seem that Woodcock was equally willing to waive conventional aesthetic considerations if a poet impressed him as writing with warmth and sincerity; he remarked flippantly of Rona Murray that "she may not be a major poet (who cares?) but she is a very genuine and warm poet."[180]

If George Woodcock were a consistent critic, this forthright renunciation of universal standards of literary excellence, this retreat into his own (albeit peculiarly Canadian) version of critical relativism, would be extremely ominous. It would toll the knell of his career as a literary critic, announcing that henceforth he would be only the social commentator, the journalistic distributor of brickbats and bouquets. It is unlikely, however, that Woodcock will pursue these comments to their logical conclusion; we have seen that he has eschewed the evaluation of Canadian literature before without obeying his own veto. Despite his 1955 declaration that the Canadian critic must elucidate the indigenous flavour of our literature, he declined in The World of Canadian Writing, as in his earlier works, to apply rigorously his regionalist and pluralist view of our literary tradition. The book contained only isolated comments on this topic;

on the affinity between Sid Marty's animism and that of the Coast Indians,[181] or on the way prairie writers have grappled symbolically with their immense landscape.[182] To the present day Woodcock has refrained from proposing a central Canadian tradition with its canon of great writers, and one assumes he will also refrain in future. His inconsistency in urging others to take up the task but refusing to do so himself has not been a benighted and fortuitous error, but rather a prescient means of accommodating his idiosyncratic empathies and of sustaining his synthetic approach. His deliberate vagueness has enabled him to focus, as the case has required, on the writer's unique sensibility, or on his attachment to his own regional and pluralist culture, or on his relation to formal and philosophical movements in other literatures. Meanwhile, Woodcock's other writings of the sixties and seventies extended the dominant Romantic-anarchist inclinations of his criticism in more consistent and more polemical directions.

NOTES

1. George Woodcock, "Views of Canadian Criticism," Odysseus Ever Returning: Essays on Canadian Writers and Writing (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1970), p. 136.
2. Woodcock, Odysseus, p. 136.
3. Woodcock, Odysseus, p. 136.
4. George Woodcock, in letter to Roderick Haig-Brown of 12th September, 1972, Taking it to the Letter (Montreal: Quadrant Editions, 1981), p. 32.
5. George Woodcock, "Summer Thoughts," Canadian Literature, No. 5 (Summer, 1960), p. 6.
6. George Woodcock, Herbert Read: The Stream and the Source (London: Faber, 1972), p. 127.
7. Woodcock, Read, p. 126.
8. George Woodcock, "New-Old Critics," Canadian Literature, No. 58 (Autumn, 1973), p. 8.
9. George Woodcock, "The Modernists and their Precursors," rev. of: William C. Wees, Vorticism and the English Avant-Garde; Hugh Kenner, The Pound Era; Leon Edel, Henry James: 1910-1916; Elliot B. Gose, Jr., Imagination Indulged: Canadian Literature, No. 54 (Autumn, 1972), pp. 97-101.
10. George Woodcock, "Problems of Equilibrium," Canadian Literature, No. 20 (Spring, 1964), pp. 3-5.
11. Oscar Wilde, "The Critic as Artist," in The Artist as Critic: Critical Writings of Oscar Wilde, ed. Richard Ellmann (New York: Random House, 1968), p. 369.
12. George Woodcock, "Criticism and Other Arts," Canadian Literature, No. 49 (Summer, 1971) p. 4.

13. quoted by Woodcock in "Criticism and other Arts," Canadian Literature, No. 49 (Summer, 1971), p. 3.

14. Woodcock, "Criticism and other Arts," p. 3.

15. Woodcock, "Criticism and other Arts," p. 5.

16. Woodcock, "Criticism and other Arts," p. 3.

17. Lionel Trilling, "The Sense of the Past," first printed in The Liberal Imagination (New York: New Directions, 1950), reprinted in Twentieth Century Criticism: The Major Statements, ed. William J. Handy & Max Westbrook (New York: Macmillan, 1974), p. 368.

18. J.V. Cunningham, "Appendix I: The Ancient Quarrel between History and Poetry," Tradition and Poetic Structure (Wisconsin: Alan Swallow, 1960), p. 69.

19. Woodcock, Read, p. 127.

20. George Woodcock, The Crystal Spirit: A Study of George Orwell (Boston: Little, Brown, 1966), p. 303.

21. George Woodcock, Dawn and the Darkest Hour: A Study of Aldous Huxley (London: Faber, 1972), p. 145.

22. In 1955 Woodcock deemed it both impossible and undesirable "to conceive anything like a group of New Canadian Critics" (Odysseus Ever Returning, p. 136), and in "Foxes in Hedgehogs' Skins," The Sewanee Review, Vol. LXXXVII, No. 3 (July-Sept., 1979), p. 485, claimed that Russian literature, with its strong historical roots and theological influences, would also be inappropriate for New Critical analysis. He argued, in "The Two Faces of Modern Marxism," Sewanee Review, Vol. LXXXVI, No. 4 (Oct.-Dec., 1978), p. 588, that "when so many academics withdrew into the fastnesses of New Criticism, a number of stalwart reviewers in literary periodicals "remained very much aware that literature could not be detached from its context in life." Once again Woodcock harangued academics who adopted a New Critical approach in "The Public Critics," Sewanee Review, Vol. LXXXIX, No. 4 (Fall, 1981), p. 612: "Fear of the biographical fallacy has too often led academics to extrapolate from the literature they discuss coded structures of theory so depersonalized and so detached from any evident intentions of the author that, if what the critic says is true, novels and poems might just as easily in the end be written by well-programmed computers as by men and women."

23. T.S. Eliot, The Sacred Wood (London: Methuen, 1928), Preface, p. viii.

24. I.A. Richards, Practical Criticism (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1929).
Richards' investigation of meaning was a precursor of Wimsatt's The Verbal Icon and later studies in semantics, and of the scrupulous explications of poems made by Empson and Blackmur.

25. ed. Robert Graves and Laura Riding, A Survey of Modernist Poetry (London: William Heinemann, 1927).

26. William Empson, Seven Types of Ambiguity (London: Chatto & Windus, 1930).

27. quoted by George Watson, The Literary Critics: A Study of English Descriptive Criticism (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1962), p. 206.

28. ed. Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren, Understanding Poetry (New York: Random House, 1938), p. 15.

29. Cleanth Brooks, The Well-Wrought Urn (London: Dobson, 1947), p. 197.

30. Allen Tate, The Man of Letters in the Modern World (New York: Methuen, 1955).
"I should like to think that criticism has been written, and may be again," Tate mused, "from a mere point of view."(p. 8)

31. In his Critics and Criticism (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952), p. 83, Crane showed his support, nevertheless, for the ahistorical approach, quoting approvingly Eliot's maxim of "poetry as poetry and not another thing."

32. W.K. Wimsatt, The Verbal Icon: Studies in the Meaning of Poetry (Lexington, Kentucky: University of Kentucky Press, 1954), pp. 4, 21.

33. Wimsatt, Icon, pp. 9, 22, 32-33.

34. Brooks, Urn, p. 207.

35. Brooks, Urn, p. 206.

36. George Woodcock, The World of Canadian Writing (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1980), pp. 275, 274.

37. George Woodcock, "Purdy's Prelude and Other Poems," rev. of: Seymour Mayne, Face; Dorothy Livesay,

Disasters of the Sun; Pat Lowther, The Age of the Bird; Al Purdy, On the Bearpaw Sea; Miriam Mandel, Lions at her Face; Al Purdy, In Search of Owen Roblin; Peter Stevens, And the Dying Sky like Blood; Eugene McNamara, Passages and Other Poems and Diving for the Body: Canadian Literature, No. 64 (Spring, 1975), p. 94.

38. Woodcock, "Two Aspects of A.J.M. Smith," Odysseus, pp. 114-15.

39. George Woodcock, "Poetry," The Literary History of Canada: Canadian Literature in English, ed. Carl F. Klinck, 2nd ed., Vol. 3 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976), p. 314.

George Woodcock, "Playing with Freezing Fire," rev. of: Margaret Atwood, Selected Poems; Andrew Suknaski, Wood Mountain Poems and On First Looking Down from Lions Gate Bridge; Sid Stephen, Boethuck Poems; Patrick Lane, Unborn Things; Richard Outram, Turns and other Poems; Doug Fetherling, Achilles' Navel; Dorothy Livesay, Ice Age: Canadian Literature, No. 70 (Autumn, 1976), p. 84.

40. George Woodcock, "Beyond the Divide: Notes on Recent Poetry in British Columbia," World of Canadian Writing, p. 258.

41. George Woodcock, "Swarming of Poets: An Editorial Reportage," Canadian Literature, No. 50 (Autumn, 1971), p. 9.

42. Woodcock, "Purdy's Prelude," CL, p. 93.

43. George Woodcock, "Poetry of Time and Place: Recent Canadian Trends," World of Canadian Writing, p. 245.

44. Woodcock, "Playing with Freezing Fire," CL, p. 88.

Woodcock, "Poetry of Time and Place," World, pp. 247-48.

45. Woodcock, "Two Looks at Birney," Odysseus, p. 121.

Woodcock, "Poetry," Literary History of Canada, p. 309.

46. George Woodcock, "The Virtues of Urbanity," rev. of: Robert Finch, Acis in Oxford and Other Poems, Canadian Literature, No. 13 (Summer, 1962), pp. 71-72.

47. Wimsatt, Icon, p. 6.

48. M.H. Abrams, The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition (New York: Oxford University Press, 1953), p. 22.

49. George Woodcock, "Critics and Creators," rev. of: David S. Thatcher, Nietzsche in England, 1890-1914; Tom Marshall, The Psychic Mariner: A Reading of the Poems of D.H. Lawrence; Geoffrey Durrant, Wordsworth and the Great System: Canadian Literature, No. 49 (Summer, 1971), p. 71.

50. George Woodcock, "Fragments from a Tenth-Hour Journal," Northern Journey, No. 3 (October, 1973), p. 28.

51. George Woodcock, "Notes on Visitations," Notes on Visitations: Poems, 1936-1975 (Toronto: Anansi, 1975), pp. 100-101.

52. George Woodcock, "Beyond the Divide: Notes on Recent Poetry in British Columbia," World, pp. 253-54.

53. George Woodcock, Thomas Merton, Monk and Poet: A Critical Study (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1978). At one point Woodcock judged, for example, that Merton had "finally reconciled his two vocations" and recognized the "kinship of the aesthetic and the spiritual and how they serve each other," citing as proof the following statement from Merton's No Man is an Island: "The mind that responds to the intellectual and spiritual values that lie hidden in a poem, a painting, or a piece of music, discovers a spiritual vitality that lifts it above itself, takes it out of itself, and makes it present to itself on a level of being that it did not know it could ever achieve" (p. 69)

54. Woodcock, Thomas Merton, p. 172. Merton's own description of the vision, quoted by Woodcock, was as follows:

> "The thing about all this is that there is no puzzle, no problem, and really no 'mystery.' All problems are resolved and everything is clear, simply because what matters is clear. The rock, all matter, all life, is charged with dharmakaya...everything is emptiness and everything is compassion. I don't know when in my life I have ever had such a sense of beauty and spiritual validity running together in one aesthetic illumination."

55. Woodcock, Thomas Merton, p. 99.

56. Woodcock, "Views of Canadian Criticism," Odysseus, p. 142.

57. Woodcock, "Song of the Sirens: Notes on Leonard Cohen," Odysseus, p. 104.

58. Woodcock, "Four Facets of Malcolm Lowry," Odysseus, p. 74.

59. Woodcock, "A Grab at Proteus: Notes on Irving Layton," Odysseus, p. 82.

60. Gerald Graff, Literature Against Itself: Literary Ideas in Modern Society (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), pp. 47-48.

61. T.S. Eliot, The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism (London: Faber, 1933), p. 30.

62. Eliot, Use of Poetry, p. 151.

63. Yvor Winters, in his In Defense of Reason (New York: William Morrow, 1947) argued that art dealt in the same kind of meaning as other rational discourse, and was therefore vehemently critical of Eliot's view that the emotion or intuition at the heart of all art was beyond rational analysis. He disparaged this way of dissociating artistic experience from all other experience:

> "T.S. Eliot, for example, tells us that the human experience about which the poem appears to be written has been transmuted in the aesthetic process into something new which is different in kind from all other experience. The poem is not then, as it superficially appears, a statement about a human experience, but is a thing in itself.... The chief disadvantage (of the theory) is that it renders intelligible discussion of art impossible, and it relegates art to the position of an esoteric indulgence, possibly though not certainly harmless, but hardly of sufficient importance to merit a high position among other human activities" (p. 6).

64. T.E. Hulme, Speculations: Essays on Humanism and the Philosophy of Art, ed. Herbert Read (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1924), p. 118.

65. Alfred North Whitehead, Science and the Modern World, (New York: Free Press, 1967). (First published 1925.) "I would term the doctrine of these lectures, the theory of organic mechanism," Whitehead stated. "In this theory, the molecules may blindly run in accordance with the general laws, but the molecules differ in their intrinsic characters according to the general organic plans of the situations in which they find themselves" (p. 80).

66. Wyndham Lewis, "Time and Western Man," Wyndham Lewis: An Anthology of his Prose, ed. E.W.F. Tomlin (London: Methuen, 1969), pp. 85, 175.

67. Frank Kermode, Romantic Image (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1957), p. 148.

68. Gerald Graff, in Literature against Itself, p. 49, noted that this and all other theories of art as nonconceptual knowledge tend to rob art of its stature as a valuable way of knowing about the world:

> "From the position that the literary symbol means no more than itself (autotelic art) it is only a step to the position that literature has no meaning (anti-teleological art), or that its meaning is totally indeterminate and 'open' to interpretation. The theory of the nondiscursive symbol, though capable of supporting Coleridge's affirmation of literature's transcendent truth, is equally capable of supporting the bleakest, most naturalistic denial of transcendence."

69. I.A. Richards, Science and Poetry (New York: W.W. Norton, 1926), p. 72.

70. W.E. Collin, The White Savannahs (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975). See Appendix A, a review published in 1943-44, p. 299; book appeared in 1936.

71. Collin, White Savannahs, p. 194.

72. A.J.M. Smith, On Poetry and Poets: Selected Essays of A.J.M. Smith (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1977), pp. 49, 52, 57, 72.

73. In his rejected Preface to New Provinces (1936), an anthology that was both a manifesto and an early book-publication for Smith, F.R. Scott, A.M. Klein, Robert Finch, and Leo Kennedy, the chief Modernists in Canada at the time, Smith insisted "that the poet is not a dreamer, but a man of sense; that poetry is a discipline because it is an art; and that it is further a useful art" [A.J.M. Smith: A Rejected Preface," The Making of Modern Poetry in Canada, ed. Louis Dudek and Michael Gnarowski (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1967), p. 41].
He affirmed autotelic art, however, in making an ideal of the nondiscursive Image, and exalting Archibald MacLeish's maxim that "A poem should not mean, but be" (p. 40). The Preface also contained evidence of Smith's Romantic fallacy of Intentionalism, with its attendant jargon: "There would be less objection to these poems," he wrote of earlier anthologies, "if the observation were accurate and its expression vivid, or

if we could feel that the emotion was a genuine and intense one" (p. 39).

74. An interesting transitional figure in this regard was Lionel Stevenson. Writing just after the birth of Modernism in England, in his Appraisals of Canadian Literature (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1926), Stevenson deplored the Modernist "subordination of feeling to cerebration" (p. 12), maintaining that poetry by its nature appealed to "the deep unreasoning instincts from which our emotions spring" (p. 106). In Stevenson's view the Canadian poet was especially fortunate, for his proximity to nature endowed him with an "instinctive pantheism" while his distance from cumbersome traditions enabled him to reject "the widely accepted heresy at the present day to the effect that poetry must contain thought" (p. 100).

75. T.E. Hulme, Speculations, p. 116.

76. Woodcock, Herbert Read, p. 180.

77. Woodcock, Herbert Read, pp. 122, 232.

78. Woodcock, Read, p. 219.

79. Woodcock, Read, pp. 193-195.

80. Woodcock, Read, p. 212.

81. Woodcock, Read, p. 221.

82. Woodcock, Read, p. 143.

83. Woodcock, Read, p. 142.

84. Peter Hughes, George Woodcock (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1974), p. 21.

85. Woodcock, Read, p. 281.

86. Letter received from George Woodcock, 20th May, 1981.

87. George Woodcock, "A Historical Introduction" to The Anarchist Reader, ed. Woodcock (Glasgow: Collins, 1977), p. 18.

88. Peter Hughes, Woodcock, p. 11.

89. Peter Hughes, Woodcock, p. 8.

90. Edmund Wilson, Axel's Castle (New York: Scribners, 1931), p. 292.

91. quoted by Woodcock in his Preface to Notes on Visitations, p. viii.

92. "Champs Elysées" was enclosed in a letter received from George Woodcock, 1st January, 1981.

93. George Woodcock, Summer Fire to Arctic Winter: Notes on the Author's Career as a Poet, for CBC's Saturday Evening, 13 May, 1965.
All references are to the CBC recording of the talk, held at the CBC Radio Archive, 90 Sumach St., Toronto, Ontario.

94. Woodcock, "The Green Moat of Time," Notes on Visitations, p. 68.

95. Woodcock, "Song," Notes, p. 67.

96. Woodcock, "Windows," Notes, p. 59.

97. Woodcock, Summer Fire to Arctic Winter.

98. Woodcock, "Poem," Selected Poems of George Woodcock (Vancouver: Clarke, Irwin, 1967), p. 21.

99. Al Purdy, Introduction to Notes on Visitations, p. ii.

100. Woodcock, "On the Poetry of Al Purdy," World of Canadian Writing, p. 261.

101. George Woodcock, Maskerman, published as one issue of Prism, Vol. 2, No. 2 (Winter, 1961), p. 39.
(dir. by Gerald Newman for CBC's CBC Stage, 28 August, 1960.)

102. George Woodcock, "Voices Set Free," Canadian Literature, No. 85 (Summer, 1980), p. 158.

103. Woodcock, "Voices Set Free," p. 159.

104. George Woodcock, The Floor of the Night, dir. by Gerald Newman for CBC's Midweek Theatre, 21 July, 1965.
All references are to the recording of the play held at the CBC Radio Archive, 90 Sumach St., Toronto, Ontario.

105. George Woodcock, Anima, or Swann Grown Old (Coatsworth, Ont.: Black Moss Press, 1977). In this regard, see especially "Anima," p. 7; "Black Epiphanies," pp. 27-28; and "Bone and Skin," p. 8.

106. Woodcock, "The Emptied-out Heart," Anima, pp. 29-31.

107. George Woodcock, letter to Al Purdy of 14th April, 1978, Taking it to the Letter, p. 126.
Woodcock admitted that there had always been a hidden Romantic strain in his sensibility:

> "There are some things out of the past that, as you know, have to come out some time, and a lot of vestiges that stay, like electrodes planted in the mind, no matter how long one lives. I've probably brought them out in this collection, and I doubt if I'll write anything like it again.... I have a feeling that romantics somehow stay green longer than other people - perhaps not on the surface, but when you cut the sap still runs."

108. Woodcock, "The Song of the Sirens: Notes on Leonard Cohen," Odysseus, pp. 93-94.

109. Woodcock, "Private Fantasies: Collective Myths. John Glassco's Decadent Fiction," World of Canadian Writing, p. 115.

110. Richard Altick, Lives and Letters: A History of Literary Biography in England and America (New York: Knopf, 1966), p. xi.

111. Altick, Lives and Letters, p. 94.

112. Woodcock, letter to Fraser Sutherland, 29th July, 1973, Taking it to the Letter, p. 49.
Apparently, Sutherland had asked Woodcock his opinion of editing by committee. The reply shed light on Woodcock's earlier experience in editing War Commentary/Freedom:

> "When I first went into anarchist journalism in 1940, War Commentary was run by a committee. The result was time-wasting obstructionalism, as the eight editors discussed every piece. The outcome - a devastating eventual split in the group. After that, keeping a vaguely defined editorial board for W.C. and its successor, Freedom, we let the active editing sort itself out by affinity, with pairs of editors working by rotation and in the main without interference. But when I started Now I did it on the single editor system, and when CL started I made it clear that all decisions regarding material going into the journal would be mine and final."

113. Woodcock, World of Canadian Writing, p. xi.

114. Woodcock, World of Canadian Writing, p. x.

115. In "Novels from Near and Far," Canadian Literature, No. 73 (Summer, 1977) Woodcock revealed that his own

residence in the backhill community of Sooke on Vancouver Island had been the basis of his special empathy for Jack Hodgins' fiction:

> "I read The Invention of the World with part of my mind wandering through the world that had seemed so strange to me when I entered it half a life ago.- the world of the loggers and their whores and the stump farmers and the Anglo-Irish eccentrics and millenarian communities, and I was delighted with the felicity of observation that had enabled Hodgins to catch so well the look and mood of the wild sea-forest-and-mountain landscape, and the speech and mannerisms of its inhabitants" (p. 90).

116. George Woodcock, "Fires in Winter," rev. of Lives of Short Duration by David Adams Richards, Books in Canada (March, 1982), pp. 13-14.

117. George Woodcock, The Meeting of Time and Space: Regionalism in Canadian Literature (Edmonton: NeWest Press, 1981), p. 16.

118. Woodcock, "Away from Lost Worlds: Notes on the Development of a Canadian Literature," Odysseus, p. 10.

119. Woodcock, "Rounding Giotto's Circle: Brian Moore's Poor Bitches," Odysseus, p. 40.
Nor was it apposite to suggest that Brian Moore had "claimed his place as a novelist with a series of women characters each as frail and ridden and unforgettable as Emma Bovary." Surely Moore's excellence did not reside solely in his creation of female characters; furthermore, how could these characters be as unforgettable as Madame Bovary if (as was certainly the case) Moore's prose was not as accomplished as that of Flaubert?

120. Woodcock, "The Human Elements: Margaret Laurence's Fiction," The World of Canadian Writing, p. 41.
It was equally vague and misleading to state that "there is a particular closeness between them in the fact that each is seeking to deal with a land of exceptional vastness, and also to reconcile a sense of history in a time of rapid change...with a passionate sense of the importance of personal experiences and particular destinies." Could these intentions not be found in a great many novelists?

121. Woodcock, "The Novel that never Ends: David Watmough's Reminiscent Fiction," World of Canadian Writing, p. 219.

122. Woodcock, "On the Poetry of Al Purdy," World of Canadian Writing, pp. 262-63.

123. Woodcock, "Poetry," in The Literary History of Canada, pp. 315, 310, 304.

124. Woodcock, "Poetry," The Literary History of Canada, p. 286.

125. Woodcock, "On Editing Canadian Literature: Recollections in 1977," World of Canadian Writing, p. 10.
In the first issue of Canadian Literature (Summer, 1959) Woodcock had affirmed the "synthetic approach" of the "public critic," stressing the magazine's independence from its academic connections. He also made clear that "the analyses of the critics" were not to be preferred over the generally non-evaluative "reflections" of the writers (a policy that hindered the journal's critical function):

> "We welcome the reflections of writers on their own craft as much as the analyses of the critics. Our field is that of Canadian writers and their work and setting without further limitations, and anything that touches on this subject - the biographical as well as the purely critical essay, the discussion of general literary problems as well as that of individual authors - can expect our friendly consideration" (pp. 3-4).

126. Woodcock, "On Editing Canadian Literature," World of Canadian Writing, p. 16.

127. Woodcock, "Poetry," Literary History of Canada, p. 285.
The article in which Woodcock finally gave up the attempt to review all books of poetry published in Canada - "A Swarming of Poets: An Editorial Reportage," Canadian Literature, No. 50 (Autumn, 1971), pp. 3-16. - contained a very general survey of the poets and trends and little presses thriving in 1971. He stated that he had read some eighty books and booklets of poetry, and that only thirty or forty could be noticed at meaningful length; hence it had been impossible "to be more than impressionistic" (p. 4).

128. Woodcock, "Purdy's Prelude and Other Poems," CL, pp. 97-98.

129. Woodcock, "Poetry," Literary History of Canada, pp. 309, 315, 311.

130. Woodcock, "Two Aspects of A.J.M. Smith," Odysseus, p. 118.

131. Woodcock, "Poetry of Time and Place: Recent Canadian Trends," World of Canadian Writing, p. 242.

132. Woodcock, "Possessing the Land: Notes on Canadian Fiction," World of Canadian Writing, pp. 20-21.

133. Woodcock, "On the Poetry of Al Purdy," World of Canadian Writing, p. 267.

134. E.K. Brown, Responses and Evaluations: Essays on Canada, ed. David Staines (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1977), p. 274.

135. Woodcock, "Criticism and other Arts," CL, No. 50, p. 6.

136. George Woodcock, Mordecai Richler (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1970), p. 44.

Woodcock, "Two Looks at Birney," Odysseus, p. 125.

Woodcock, "Possessing the Land: Notes on Canadian Fiction, World of Canadian Writing, p. 29.

Woodcock, "Two Aspects of A.J.M. Smith," Odysseus, p. 112.

137. George Woodcock, "To the Past via the Future," rev. of The Colours of War by Matt Cohen, Canadian Literature, No. 71 (Winter, 1977), p. 77.

138. George Woodcock, "The Wheel of Exile," rev. of St. Urbain's Horseman by Mordecai Richler, Tamarack Review, No. 58 (1971), p. 66.

139. Woodcock, "Wheel of Exile," TR, p. 68.

140. Woodcock, "Wheel of Exile," TR, p. 69.

141. In an interview with Geoff Hancock, Canadian Fiction Magazine, No. 30/31 (1979), p. 142, Woodcock revealed that he had tried to write novels, and that his insight as a critic of fiction was based upon his own failures: "I once thought I would become a novelist, and actually wrote three novels. I recognized - painfully - their faults, analysed them rigorously, eventually destroyed them all, and emerged from those years of labour, which lasted intermittently from 1937 to 1950, with some very good ideas on how not to write a novel. That, I think, explains what sharpness

I have as a critic of fiction; I have an experiencial knowledge of all the pitfalls and can admire those who have overleapt them."

142. George Woodcock, Hugh MacLennan (Toronto: Copp Clark, 1969).
These various faults are discussed on the following pages: one-dimensional characters - pp. 48, 88, 102, 109; awkward shyness about sex - p. 66; contrived endings - pp. 68, 79, 103; sketchy cultural analysis - p. 81.

143. George Woodcock, "A Nation's Odyssey: The Novels of Hugh MacLennan," Odysseus, pp. 12-23.

144. Woodcock, "The Human Elements: Margaret Laurence's Fiction," World of Canadian Writing, see pp. 54-62.

145. Woodcock, "The Eye of a Stranger," Odysseus, p. 154.

146. Woodcock, "The Eye of a Stranger," Odysseus, p. 157.

147. The quotation is from a statement by D.S. Savage used by Woodcock as the epigraph to his article "Views of Canadian Criticism," Odysseus, p. 130.

148. Woodcock, "Views of Canadian Criticism," Odysseus, p. 130.

149. Woodcock, "Views of Canadian Criticism," Odysseus, pp. 138-141.

150. Woodcock, "Views of Canadian Criticism," Odysseus, pp. 140-141.

151. George Woodcock, "Getting Away with Survival," Canadian Literature, No. 41 (Summer, 1969), pp. 3-7.

152. Woodcock, "Views of Canadian Criticism," Odysseus, p. 131.

153. Woodcock, "Poetry," Literary History of Canada, p. 299.

154. Milton Wilson, "Other Canadians and After," Masks of Poetry: Canadian Critics on Canadian Verse (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1962), p. 135.
Wilson suggested that the Canadian poet's detachment from international literary currents, while being influenced by them, was a fortunate condition:
"I even wonder whether colonialism may not be, in theory at least, the most desirable poetic state. It gives you a catholic sense of all the things

> poetry can do without embarrassing you by telling you what at this particular moment it can't.... The Canadian poet has all the models in the language (not to mention other languages) at his disposal, but lacks the deadening awareness that he is competing with them" (pp. 137-138).

This statement was a direct echo of the concluding lines of A.J.M. Smith's Introduction to The Oxford Book of Canadian Verse (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1960), p. li:

> "But the Canadian poet has one advantage - an advantage that derives from his position of separateness and isolation. He can draw upon French, British, and American sources in language and literary convention; at the same time he enjoys a measure of detachment that enables him to select and adapt what is relevant and useful. This gives to contemporary Canadian poetry in either language a distinctive quality - its eclectic detachment. This can be, and has been, a defect of timidity and mediocrity; but it can also be, as it is hoped this book will show, a virtue of intelligence and discrimination."

155. A.J.M. Smith, Introduction to The Book of Canadian Poetry, On Poetry and Poets, pp. 19-46.

156. John Sutherland, Introduction to Other Canadians, The Making of Modern Poetry in Canada, ed. Dudek & Gnarowski, p. 57.

157. Paul West, "Ethos and Epic: Aspects of Contemporary Canadian Poetry," Contexts of Canadian Criticism, ed. Eli Mandel (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), pp. 206-207.

158. Robert L. McDougall, "The Dodo and the Cruising Awk," Contexts of Canadian Criticism, p. 219.

159. D.G. Jones, Butterfly on Rock: A Study of Themes and Images in Canadian Literature (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970), p. 134.

160. George Woodcock, "Tasting the Castalian Waters," Canadian Literature, No. 64 (Spring, 1975), p. 3.

161. George Woodcock, "Horizon of Survival," Canadian Literature, No. 55 (Winter, 1973), p. 5.

162. Woodcock, "Margaret Atwood: Poet as Novelist," World of Canadian Writing, pp. 160-161.

163. Woodcock, "Castalian Waters," CL, p. 7.

164. ed. Paul Cappon, In our own House: Social Perspectives on Canadian Literature (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1978), p. 45.

165. Cappon, Social Perspectives, pp. 60-61.

166. E.K. Brown, On Canadian Poetry (Ottawa: Tecumseh Press, 1977), p. 27.
(first published as a book - Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1943; first section, "The Problem," published in Canadian Literature Today - Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1938).

167. Miriam Waddington, "Canadian Tradition and Canadian Literature," Journal of Commonwealth Literature, No. 8 (December, 1969), p. 140.

168. Waddington, "Canadian Tradition," JCL, p. 141.

169. George Woodcock, "Areopagitica Rewritten," Canadian Literature, No. 2 (Autumn, 1959), p. 4.

170. George Woodcock, "A Spectre is Haunting Canada," Canadian Literature, No. 17 (Summer, 1963), p. 4.

171. George Woodcock, "Arts in the Politician's Eye," Canadian Literature, No. 43 (Winter, 1970), pp. 4-5.

172. Woodcock, "Arts in the Politician's Eye," CL, p. 6.

173. George Woodcock, "Living out of the World," Rejection of Politics (Toronto: New Press, 1971), pp. 65-71.

174. George Woodcock, "New Directions in Publishing (I)," Canadian Literature, No. 47 (Winter, 1971), pp. 3-9.

George Woodcock, "Centrifugal Publishing," Canadian Literature, No. 39 (Winter, 1969), p. 4.

175. Woodcock, Meeting of Time and Space, pp. 9-15.

176. Woodcock, Meeting of Time and Space, pp. 12-13.

177. Woodcock, Meeting of Time and Space, p. 23.

178. Woodcock, "The Human Elements: Margaret Laurence's Fiction," World of Canadian Writing, pp. 40-41.
In 100 Great Canadians (Edmonton: Hurtig, 1980), some artists mentioned were deemed great for their evocations of time and place rather than for aesthetic criteria. Susanna Moodie's books were important portrayals of the immigrant experience (pp. 38-39); Paul Kane's paintings provided a record

of Indian culture before the arrival of the white man (pp. 45-46); Nellie McClung was more important as a "fearless fighter and a powerful influence" than an accomplished novelist (p. 105); and Pauline Johnson "was really less important for what she created or for the way she interpreted Indian traditions than for what her great success as a stage personality tells us about the popular tastes of Canadians in the age of Wilfrid Laurier"(p. 92).

179. Woodcock, "On A.M. Klein: A Tentative Note," World of Canadian Writing, pp. 272-273.

180. Woodcock, "Beyond the Divide: Notes on Recent Poetry in British Columbia," World of Canadian Writing, pp. 259-260.

181. Woodcock, "Poetry of Time and Place: Recent Canadian Trends," World of Canadian Writing, p. 246.

182. Woodcock, "Possessing the Land: Notes on Canadian Fiction," World of Canadian Writing, p. 30.

CHAPTER IV

LATER POLEMICS

In view of the difficulty Woodcock has encountered in surviving financially as a Canadian man of letters with a polemical purpose, one is tempted to see him as a man out of his time, who might have been more at home in the eighteenth or early nineteenth centuries, in the heyday of the man of letters and the higher journalism. He has divulged an attraction for these periods when the English writer enjoyed a greater freedom to mingle polemics with "literary" writing:

> Dean Swift could act as a political pamphleteer without finding anything inconsistent between his writing on social matters and his literary work.... Similarly, at the time of the French Revolution it was possible for a littérateur like Godwin to play a leading role in social activity by writing a treatise on Political Justice. At the same period Hazlitt could write political commentary and literary essays without realizing any deep incompatibility between these two activities.[1]

Woodcock is, however, very much a man of his time. The predominant Romantic strain in his thought, his interest in the moral and religious values of primitive cultures, his inquiries into the demise of the British Empire coupled with his attacks on the iniquities of imperialism and its religious minions - all of these mark Woodcock as a man whose beliefs were shaped during the thirties and forties in England. His intellectual leaders were Aldous Huxley, Herbert Read, and George Orwell, whose influences are seen respectively in Woodcock's mixture of scepticism and mystical idealism, in the anarcho-Romantic matrix of his political and aesthetic beliefs, and in his profound empathy with suffering caused by social injustice and political oppression. If the fervour and tenacity of Woodcock's polemical intentions seem out of place today it is because, like his contemporaries of that time, he has sought to be known for embodying certain ideals more than for his aesthetic attainments.

"It is by his ideas, rather than by any particular skill in putting them over, that he will live."[2] This was John Wain's peroration on George Orwell, and it could well be applied to Woodcock; like Orwell, he must be understood as, first and foremost, a polemicist. His writings have always exhibited the strengths and weaknesses of polemics, his greatest strength - a persistent dedication to anarchist ideals - also being a source of weakness, for it has lent his works, despite their diversity of subject matter, a dull predictability. His style has been shaped by his desire to purvey his anarchist ideals to the public at large; it has been distinguished by lucidity, humour, and moral urgency, and an ever-present tendency to depict peoples and cultures through what he has called "grand co-ordinating visions" or all-encompassing themes. Yet he has also descended to the level of public parlance, indulging in amateur psychoanalysis and journalistic impressionism. In some passages his usually cogent arguments have given way to a display of orotund prose, or his quiet commitment to anarchist ideals has been submerged by the irrational exhortations of the proselyte.

While these considerations apply to Woodcock's travel books and social histories which have resulted from his frequent and wide-ranging peregrinations, the chief problem in his biographies has been that of objectivity with its several ramifications. After a decade of silence following his 1956 study of Proudhon, Woodcock returned to the writing of intellectual biographies, once again choosing subjects with whom he had obvious intellectual affinities. Henry Walter Bates had been the explorer-hero of his childhood reading; Aldous Huxley had inspired him in his youth; Herbert Read had been his mentor and George Orwell his friend in young manhood, when Gandhi became a model of moral perseverence in the struggle against imperialism; Thomas Merton was a mystic in the anarchist mould; Amor de Cosmos was a forgotten populist politician in the history of Woodcock's adopted province; and Gabriel Dumont was the leader of one of those anarchic "little peoples" whose cultural integrity Woodcock has zealously defended.

The important critical question about these works, then, is whether Woodcock's polemical bias was held in check by a sense of objectivity, or whether his passionate commitment to anarchist ideals overcame his critical detachment, causing him to misrepresent his subjects. When he maintained a balanced perspective, a sound central argument served as the cynosure for empathy, perspicuity, sound cultural analyses, and cogent literary criticisms. If passion overcame reason, however, these qualities were overshadowed by polemical distortions.

Woodcock has acknowledged the difficulty of wiping away the layers of legend and propaganda to achieve "the ideal of biographical balance."[3] He noted that one biographer was "too close to his subject both in time and personal relationship for the good of the book,"[4] and that another showed an excessive "favourability toward his subject."[5] In the Preface to his study of Herbert Read, Woodcock admitted that until recently his friendship with Read had entailed a sympathy that was "detrimental to the biographer's proper detachment," and that his temperamental and theoretical affinities with Read had made him unable to take "that stance in the middle distance which seems appropriate for the objective biographer."[6] Woodcock's polemical purposes have made the presence of such affinities de rigueur throughout his biographies, "Woodcock uses his subjects to speak directly and singly to his reader," declared Peter Hughes; "Godwin, Proudhon, Kropotkin and even Oscar Wilde often speak for him."[7] Certainly he enhanced the credibility and importance of the anarchist ideals of Godwin, Behn, and Wilde by downplaying their other beliefs and their personal faults. In later biographies he became more adept, however, at avoiding what he called "eloquent special pleading."[8]

The Bloomsbury biographers had, he believed, impaired their objectivity by going too far in the direction of brevity, indiscretion, and iconoclasm. Disparaging Lytton Strachey, he insisted that biography must be "something more profound than a polished and ironical essay on the disparity between men and their pretensions."[9] Instead, Woodcock favoured a sober and discreet approach, documenting and analysing his subjects' ideas rather than their psychological oddities and personal foibles. His perfect biography was "a work as close to the definitive as possible in its presentation of details, yet at the same time imaginative enough in its insights to create a real and living understanding between reader and subject."[10] It is what J.L. Clifford called the "artistic-scholarly biography," combining scrupulously thorough research with imaginative analysis. As Clifford explained, "once the evidence has been assembled, the biographer considers his role that of the imaginative creative artist."[11]

These ideals of thorough documentation, creativity, objectivity, and propriety without obscurantism were achieved in The Crystal Spirit (1966), which represented

Woodcock's maturation as a biographer. Objectivity was not problematic, for Woodcock was no longer the doctrinaire anarchist he had been when he knew Orwell in the forties; over the years he had deduced from anarchist beliefs a number of humane principles akin to Orwell's concern with individual rights. In this hybrid of one part biography and three parts critical commentary (shaped by Orwell's wish that a biography should not be written, and by Woodcock's feeling that he could not attain the objectivity required for such a work) Woodcock conveyed an empathetic understanding of Orwell's ambivalence in being from the middle class but not of it. His own childhood, with lower middle-class parents who had fallen upon hard times, engendered in Woodcock a sympathy for the oppressed and a hatred of class barriers: "on a lower scale we were like the impoverished upper middle class of Orwell's world, and perhaps similar embittering experiences in our different families helped to induce similar outlooks."[12] This background seems to have prepared Woodcock to comprehend the ambiguities and idiosyncracies surrounding Orwell's views on class.

He did not deride Orwell's guilt about being from the middle class, nor the mildly ridiculous affectations involved in his *nostalgie de la boue*: the address in Islington, the working-class furniture and clothing, the frequent feats of austerity, and the habits of smoking strong black shag tobacco and drinking tea from a saucer.[13]

He preferred to accept these mannerisms as simple tributes to the working class, or alternately as jests intended *pour épater les bourgeois*. At the same time, Woodcock pointed out that Orwell remained irrevocably bourgeois; throughout his adventures as an itinerant labourer and tramp described in *Down and Out in Paris and London*, he retained a middle class concern for keeping up appearances, and an awareness of the possibility of escape.[14] Woodcock allowed Orwell the courage not only of his convictions but also of the inconsistencies they implied. He recorded Orwell's confessions of middle class fears about his descents into the Underworld of the slums, and his admission that his five years of service with the Indian Imperial Police in Burma led him to idealize the oppressed; it was simply the natural result of being one of the oppressors himself.[15] Woodcock used wisely his knowledge of Orwell's *propria persona* to elucidate the Orwellian myth depicted in his novels, "the myth of the rebel caught in the pressures of a society dominated and fatally divided by class."[16]

Based upon an intimate *rapport* between biographer and subject, *The Crystal Spirit* was a happy vindication of Harold Nicolson's maxim that biography is "the reflection of one temperament in the mirror of another."[17] Woodcock refrained, moreover, from reflecting his subject in a distorting mirror - a mirror that was too much himself. He transcended the narrow viewpoint defined by his anarchist bias, and decried attempts by other biographers to discredit Orwell's political attitudes by exposing his personal faults and obsessions. Anthony West, for example, dismissed Orwell's views as springing from the reactions of a morbid little boy to a perfectly good public school. Woodcock denounced West's inference that Orwell's ideas were "of an infantile character," arguing that if neuroses produce ideas they do not invalidate them.[18]

By the same token, Woodcock's restraint of his polemical viewpoint made his criticisms of Nineteen Eighty-Four immensely more subtle than those of Raymond Williams, who set out to win a propaganda victory for Marxist socialism by defaming its best-known critic. Williams claimed that Orwell's portrayal of the proles as "people who have never learned to think" but from whose loins "a race of conscious beings must one day come" was patronizing to the English working class.[19] He simply forgot that the novel was not a polemical tract about the present but an imaginative vision of the future; Orwell was not describing the working class of 1948, but speculating about what place that class might have within a rigid caste system enforced by a totalitarian régime. Woodcock showed a clearer understanding of the aesthetic demands of the novel, pointing out that its despairing mood by no means dispelled Orwell's grim faith in the proletariat as the last bastion of humanity against Fascism.[20]

Williams also erred in asserting that Nineteen Eighty-Four portrayed revolutionary activity as trivial and ineffectual; "in a filthy and repressive world," he declared, "there are deeper forms of personal resistance - as Orwell had reason to know - than the temporary affair between Winston and Julia."[21] In making this statement he ignored the fact that Winston did attempt a more effective rebellion by trying to contact the revolutionary group led by Goldstein. Similarly, in castigating Orwell for creating a relationship devoid of "any mutually recognizing personal experience" he forgot that Winston and Julia did develop an intense loyalty to each other, and in arguing that Winston's search for libidinal freedom reflected only Orwell's puerile attitude toward sex he abstracted an idea from its fictional context.[22] The anti-Utopian novels of Orwell, Zamyatin, and Huxley all focused upon the sexual aspect of political repression, and presented sexual rebellion as a natural and inevitable attack on the state's denial of freedom. Winston's attempt to liberate lust was a logical reaction against the Party's direction of sublimated sexual energy toward war hysteria and leader worship, and paralleled the sexual rebellions of Zamyatin's D-503 and Huxley's Bernard Max, who escaped from enforced promiscuity by seeking a possessive form of love.

In his efforts to discount Orwell's ideas by denigrating his personality Williams was blind to simple details of plot, to the aesthetic demands of fiction, and to the historical roots of Orwell's attitudes. As John Gross has commented, it would be impossible to gather from Williams' portrait of Orwell "that there was ever a man called Stalin, or that Orwell was reacting against very specific lies and atrocities."[23] Williams' baneful attempts to label Orwell a bourgeois intellectual, a pitiable misfit, a perfidious weekender to the working class, or a sexually frustrated adolescent were ludicrously ill-conceived and incomparably less valuable than Woodcock's less doctrinaire approach.

The refusal to enslave his critical faculty to his political ideals also marked Woodcock's treatment of Animal Farm. Though it would have suited his polemical purposes to draw attention to the beast fable's detailed allegory on Marxist socialism in Russia, he chose not to do so. He noted, of course, that Napoleon and Snowball represented Stalin and Trotsky respectively, as seen in Napoleon's outmaneuvring and expulsion of Snowball followed by the "career of purges, atrocities, and deepening tyranny that reproduces in miniscule the history of the Russian Revolution from 1917 to the 1940's."[24] Yet Woodcock did not explicate any of the more precise allusions: the symbol for the industrialization of Russia in the building of the windmill and for the Kronstadt uprising of 1921 in the hens' rebellion. Nor did he ask if the book contained a Lenin-figure, or whether the farmers Pilkington and Frederick might represent the complicity of England and Germany toward Stalinist tyranny. He preferred instead to emphasize the tale's universal theme that "old and new tyrannies belong to the same family."[25] With political disinterestedness and critical acuity, he described the novel as Orwell's highest aesthetic achievement, "a model of direct, clear description" that constituted the most apposite use of Orwell's crystalline prose.[26]

This is not to suggest that Woodcock's anarchist perspective was absent from The Crystal Spirit. He recorded that Orwell had strong sympathies with anarchist views when he returned from Burma in 1927, fought beside the Spanish anarchists a decade later, and established several friendships with anarchists during the forties.[27] Woodcock revealed that Orwell shared the reluctance of most libertarian socialists to plot the future which others would live,[28] and that his view of the Russian Revolution accorded with Bakunin's comments on the Marxist state.[29] He admitted, however, that in decrying the tyranny of public opinion endemic to most libertarian societies Orwell "put his finger on the very difficulty which the anarchist theoreticians have never explained away."[30] Avoiding the pitfall of his earlier studies of Behn and Wilde, Woodcock did not portray his subject as a misunderstood anarchist; he respected Orwell's concern not with political theory but rather with the implementation of ideals of brotherhood and fair play which he expressed under the general heading of "decency."[31] Similarly, he admired Orwell's sturdy reliance upon his own emotions and idiosyncracies, and his detachment from the tendency toward intellectual systems-building that characterized many thinkers of his day.[32]

With great perspicacity, Woodcock discerned that Orwell's attachment to the nineteenth century was central to his thought, arguing that Orwell saw the period between 1830 and 1914 as dominated by a well-established moral code and "a recognition - however inadequately implemented - of liberty as a natural human right."[33] He found that Orwell projected a great deal of his own character onto his description of Dickens as a man of generous anger, a "nineteenth century liberal, a free intelligence."[34] Orwell's staunch integrity as a moralist who held himself aloof from all dogmas led Woodcock to depict him as an individualist radical in the tradition of Hazlitt, Cobbett, and Dickens.[35]

Also very important was Woodcock's perception that Orwell was both a Don Quixote in his isolated search for truth and a Sancho Panza in his love of the physical surface of life.[36] Yet he might have carried this comment further, to explain how the homme moyen sensuel found expression in Orwell's works. No doubt the "fat little man" spoke, for example, when Orwell confused Gulliver with his creator, finding Swift unable "to believe that life - ordinary human life on the solid earth - and not some rationalized, deodorized version of it - could be made worth living."[37] It was, of course, not Swift but Gulliver who identified the Yahoos with man and sought to become a Houyhnhnm, an unnatural and ridiculous desire representing Swift's excoriating satire of the Enlightenment faith in reason. Woodcock perceived this when he stated that Swift populated his Utopia with horses "on the assumption that men would never be able to live by reason alone."[38]

Orwell's love of the sensory world also compromised his understanding of Gandhi. He could not refrain from denouncing the strict celibacy and the denial of personal possessions and friendship practiced in Gandhi's quasi-monastic ashrams:

> The essence of being human is that one does not seek perfection, that one is sometimes willing to commit sins for the sake of loyalty, that one does not push asceticism to the point where it makes friendly intercourse impossible, and that one is prepared in the end to be defeated and broken up by life, which is the inevitable price of fastening one's love upon other human individuals. No doubt alcohol, tobacco, and so forth are things that a saint must avoid, but sainthood is also a thing that human beings must avoid.[39]

Orwell could not help chuckling at the notion that one should abstain, upon pain of death, from the consumption of chicken broth.[40] In sharp contrast, Woodcock, being much better versed in the diverse forms of religious asceticism, accepted Gandhian austerities without a qualm.

These responses suggested the great differences in the sensibilities of biographer and subject. Woodcock was a scholar of religions and cultures, a world traveller, and an intellectual adventurer, whereas Orwell, in his persona of the common man, generally refused to venture further in his views than the accepted attitudes of the English working class. Orwell trusted his emotions, which told him to cling to the good old ways of his "green and pleasant land," that bucolic England he had known before the First World War. Woodcock, a truly radical thinker, allowed his passions to follow his thought, and longed to see his ideas realized in social experiments; in short, he was an avowed dreamer who hoped to see reality transformed in accordance with his ideals. Both men zealously guarded their idiosyncracies, but Orwell's were pragmatic, emotional, conservative, even parochial, while Woodcock's were intellectual, mystical, and cosmopolitan.

Despite these differences there was an annealing rapprochement between author and subject in The Crystal Spirit that was perhaps most forcibly expressed in Woodcock's emulation of Orwell's "prose like a windowpane." This was poignantly apposite, for fundamental to Orwell's oeuvre was the adage that the style is the man; he believed that the language of free and decent men must be lucid, candid, and devoid of jargon, euphemisms, and vagueness. Also salutary in this case was Woodcock's view that ideas cannot be negated by allusions to the personal faults of their creators (a view that had marred his biographies of Godwin, Behn, and Wilde.) By restraining his anarchist bias and giving a balanced and perceptive account of Orwell's life and ideas, Woodcock more than redressed the damage done by Raymond Williams out of loyalty to one of what Orwell called "the smelly little orthodoxies which are now contending for our souls."[41]

Though this combination of style and content made The Crystal Spirit peerless among Woodcock's biographies, he painted an equally judicious portrait of Aldous Huxley. Dawn and the Darkest Hour (1972) revealed many affinities between author and subject. Unlike Orwell, both were possessed of a voracious and eclectic curiosity, so that in examining Huxley's works Woodcock traced "the progress of a dedicated generalist" who sought to bring all knowledge into a synthesis that would "give total meaning to existence,"[42] a goal very similar to his own desire to unify diverse areas of knowledge by a code of anarchist beliefs. The two littérateurs were, moreover, both libertarians, dedicated to pacifism and decentralism. As a young man Woodcock had been deeply influenced by Huxley's mixture of intellectual acuity and mystical vision.

The fact that Woodcock concurred with most of his subject's ideas did not, however, blunt his criticisms of Huxley's novels. He realized that Huxley was primarily a seeker of truth and only incidentally an artist.[43] The scope of Huxley's novels of ideas was proscribed, Woodcock observed, by a lack of inventiveness which forced him to draw transparently upon his own life for character and incident. Though one-dimensional characters representing certain ideas were deemed an acceptable convention of the novel of ideas, Woodcock found the novels after Eyeless in Gaza (1936) flawed by the proffering of some hope of self-transcendence, which resolved thematic tensions.[44] In Island (1962), the novel intended to be Huxley's Philosophica Summa, he found this tension dissolved by an unconvincing celebration of a perfect society, ascribing the novel's failure to "the inadaptability of a fictional technique, developed for the ironic criticism of men and societies, to the much more difficult task of extolling the virtues of an ideal community."[45] The beautiful and well-adjusted Palanese were, Woodcock felt, anonymous and incredible, while the tortured duplicity of journalist Will Farnaby, who was converted to Pala's beliefs while he negotiated its destruction with imperialist Rendang, was the most compelling part of the novel.[46] He argued cogently that Huxley's forte was not the ingenuous creation of Utopias, but the pasquinade, the ironical sifting of a series of dichotomies yet always with the ultimate goal of mystical truth:

> To reconcile man's self-division, to recognize the predicament caused by the presence within the same being of passion and reason, of a body tied to time and a mind aspiring elsewhere, and then to move forward in this dialectic to a way of liberation: this is the developing thematic structure that conditions Huxley's novels and lifts them above mere

passing satire to the realm of moral fables.[47]

This distinction proved, as did several of Woodcock's criticisms of Canadian works, that he was not a narrow public critic interested solely in literature's relation to its audience, but was capable of perceptive thematic analyses. He provided convincing evidence, moreover, that biographical influences had made Huxley the social satirist and earnest intellectual explorer. Huxley's life was filled with suffering, including his near-blindness since childhood, the deaths of his mother and brother early in his life, the burning-down of his house, the death of his wife from cancer in 1952, and his own severe illness from the same disease a decade later.[48] His impaired eyesight led him to express what he called his "stereoscopic vision" in images of light and darkness, while his other hardships made him vulnerable and cynical, and obsessed with the struggle to come to terms with death.[49] Woodcock concluded that these experiences made satire and irony his natural modes of expression, his mysticism being an emotional aberration, a desperate hope for liberation from personal suffering.[50] He argued that Huxley's attraction to mysticism was really a wish-fulfillment, asserting that Huxley spoke so vociferously against the human craving for separateness because he had never experienced mystical non-attachment.[51]

The profound fairness of Woodcock's wide-ranging empathies was apparent in his sensitive treatments of two such different figures as Orwell and Huxley. In both cases his anarchist views were evident but not overweening; he found great value in Orwell's ideas regardless of their personal differences, and made mitigating criticisms of Huxley's mysticism despite his overt endorsement in principle of such quests for religious knowledge. In the third of his works on denizens of the thirties and forties, Woodcock was equally circumspect, tempering his anarchism with a self-critical sense of objectivity. Just as he shared a libertarian-mystical nexus of belief with Huxley, Woodcock had anarcho-Romantic attitudes in common with Read. In The Stream and the Source (1972) he delineated Read's theory that the Romantic world-view fundamental to an anarchist society could be fostered only through an aesthetic education, uncovering its roots in the ideas of Ruskin, Wilde, and Morris.[52] He recognized that Read, like Proudhon and Wilde, was a creature of paradoxes who, though a pacifist, fought in World War I, and as an anarchist supported his country's part in the second World War and in 1953 accepted a knighthood.[53]

If Read was at times transported by emotional commitment beyond the purlieus of rational consistency, his works also dealt with the conflict between passion and reason, as Woodcock showed succinctly in his analysis of the anti-Utopia, The Green Child (1935). The book conveyed, in Woodcock's view, Read's lifelong distrust of excessive rationality; he favoured the stream of passion and the natural processes over the intellectual life lived at its source. In what Woodcock called this "triptych of romantic genres"[54] the instinctual Kneeshaw was drowned in his own stream by the intellectual Olivero, who ascended to the stream's source with the non-human Green Child. There he met the Green People who abhorred the physical and worshipped the perfect stasis of death. Olivero settled happily in their land of corpses crowding out the living, adopted their passionless love of dead harmonies, and eventually expressed his hatred of life by welcoming his own death.[55]

Read's passion and reason were conjoined most effectively in his critical role as an advocate of Romantic and Modernist poetry. He asserted perspicaciously that Modernism was an extension of Romanticism; "To identify form with substance - that is precisely the romantic revolution" he wrote, espousing modern free verse as the form best suited to that purpose.[56] He also stressed psychological influences in explaining the zeniths and nadirs in a poet's work; in fact, critics have found this willingness to embrace the ideas of psychoanalysis to be Read's main contribution to modern criticism. Yet Woodcock was critical of some of Read's perceptions, judging, for example, the argument that Shelley's obsession with incest resulted from repressed homosexuality to be "rather grotesque."[57]

Woodcock was generally critical of this tendency of Read and other biographers to diminish the dignity of their subjects by amateur psychoanalysis. He pointed out that Karlinsky, by finding the intrusive pigs of Gogol's tales to be symbols of sexual aggression, proved only his prurience and incompetence.[58] This was, unfortunately, another area in which Woodcock's practice did not always live up to his theories, for he too succumbed upon occasion to a vague and unexplained use of psychological terms. In Into Tibet: The Early British Explorers (1971) he ventured the questionable remark that Thomas Manning, the third of the trio of explorers treated, showed "a strong streak of the manic depressive."[59] Manning was an eccentric Sinologist who despised the mephitic filth and ebullience of the Tibetans, praising the cleanliness and urbanity of their Chinese overlords. By befriending the Chinese he was able to reach Lhasa in 1810, succeeding where previous explorers had failed. Though Charles Lamb celebrated Manning as a "Character," Woodcock found him an "irritating and facetious pedant."[60] It seems that Woodcock had good reasons for disliking Manning, but they had little to do with the term "manic depressive."

The real reasons for this invocation are clarified by contrast with Woodcock's admiring portrait of George Bogle, who went to Tibet in 1774 as a plenipotentiary of the East India Company to investigate possibilities of trade. At first repulsed by the Tibetans' filth, cruelty, polyandry, and their priest-ridden society, he came gradually to respect their good looks, geniality, trustworthiness, and hardy self-sufficiency.[61] Bogle proved an admirable ambassador, establishing friendly relations with the Panchen Lama at Tashilunpo, and developing a genuine interest in Tibetan culture for its own sake. These qualities, especially the respect for a downtrodden people, made Bogle far more appealing to Woodcock than the haughty Manning with his callow admiration for the imperialist Chinese.

Again in Amor de Cosmos (1975) Woodcock extended sound perceptions of an eccentric character into tenuous psychoanalysis. James Alexander Smith left his home in Windsor, Nova Scotia in 1851 to take part as a photographer in the California Gold Rush. There he adopted the vainglorious name of Amor de Cosmos, expressing his "love of order, beauty, the world, the universe,"[62] and in 1858 followed the rush north to Victoria, where he started "The Colonist," a newspaper combining frontier machismo with eloquent goading of the provincial government. He was elected to the Vancouver Legislative Assembly in 1863, where he championed Confederation and responsible government, serving as Premier of British Columbia from 1872 to 1874, and then representing Victoria in the national House of Commons until 1882, when his mental health began to decline; he was declared insane in 1895 and died two years later.

Woodcock trespassed upon the premises of the psychiatrist in suggesting that De Cosmos' periods of great excitement followed by his withdrawal into "increasingly paranoic privacy"[63] had "much in common with the symptoms observed in manic-depressive psychotics."[64] Since he did not outline these symptoms in detail, Woodcock merely promulgated a legend of a colourful personality grounded in a vague layman's use of psychological terms. This cryptic use of words with precise clinical meanings was of a piece with his willingness to blend his usual urbanity with the argots of journalism and the literary marketplace. Whether because of his polemical urge to convey his ideals to the public at large, or as part of his autodidact's rejection of academic categories, he has mixed a recondite vocabulary with common parlance. His unexplained use of psychological terms has not eclipsed, however, his unrelenting emphasis upon ideas and his corresponding avoidance of the embarrassing, sordid, or sensational in his subjects' behavioural excesses.

This sense of propriety was apparent in Henry Walter Bates, Naturalist of the Amazons (1969), which grew out of Woodcock's boyhood interests in natural science and travel narratives, and his admiration for the limpid descriptions of an idyllic life found in Bates' own A Naturalist on the River Amazons. He quoted liberally from this account of Bates' eleven years on the Amazons between

1848 and 1859, remarking very briefly upon Bates' scandalous de facto marriage (which became de jure only after a child was born) upon his return to Victorian England.[65] Quite rightly, Woodcock focused on Bates' minor role in the drama surrounding the discovery of the theory of natural selection, showing that, though circumstance gave utterance of the theory to Darwin and Wallace, Bates' entomological field work was leading him to the same conclusions.

In applauding Bates' admirable acceptance of Indian culture, Woodcock voiced one of his central concerns, for he has always been an enemy of xenophobia and a defender of cultural plurality, arguing that the tendencies toward anarchism have been stronger in primitive than in more developed societies. His anarchist view of South American Indian culture was restrained in Naturalist of the Amazons, though it emerged clearly in passages such as the following description of the riparian hunt for turtle eggs. Notice also Woodcock's penchant for generalizing about the anarchist nature of various primitive cultures:

> Since the harvest of turtle eggs provided the year's supply of oil for the inhabitants of the upper Amazons, it was organized on a co-operative basis, the praias reales - as the great sand banks were called - being treated as the common property of Ega and the neighbouring districts, and the digging of the eggs regulated by a voluntary discipline as strict as that which was sustained at the same period among the Buffalo hunters of the North American prairies.[66]

This omnipresent anarchist viewpoint was evident also in Woodcock's study of Gandhi (1971). "Since Gandhi defined himself more than once as an anarchist, it is not surprising," he stated, "to find that the society he outlines fragmentarily in his articles and speeches is remarkably similar to those of the libertarian writers, and just as distant as theirs from the centralized and industrialized utopias of Marxists and other authoritarian socialists."[67] He pointed out Gandhi's anarchic distrust of rigid social planning, and celebrated his dream of India "as a pluralist country where all creeds would live in brotherhood," expressed in his opposition to attempts by Hindus and Communists to thwart religious freedom.[68]

Woodcock's anarchism was not a transfiguring prejudice, however, for it did not distort Gandhi's views, and formed part of a balanced assessment of his achievements. On one hand, Woodcock bruited the powers of Gandhi's spiritual vision in combatting the anomie of modern life and the efficacy of his doctrine of passive resistance in proving that an individual could, by non-violent means, "deploy a moral force which may result in changing the general mental climate and hence the political and social shape of the world."[69] On the other, he recognized that Gandhi's ideals were not realized by the irresistible strength of his faith, but that his success was due to an auspicious coalescence of historical and economic forces: the rise of Indian nationalism coupled with the prohibitive cost of maintianing the Empire and the withering of the English resolve to do so. What made Gandhi so much the man for his time and place was not the inherent truth of his beliefs, Woodcock observed, but his shrewdness as a lawyer and politician in manipulating the consciences of the English.[70]

The same pertinacious emphasis on anarchist ideals marked Gabriel Dumont (1975). The Métis leader was depicted as a strong man with "a deep sense of the need for mutual aid"[71] and the Métis outlook defined as "anarchic egoism, tempered by a mutual respect among the strong and generosity toward the weak."[72] Woodcock argued that the Métis village of St. Laurent on the banks of the South Saskatchewan River had an anarchist organization similar to that of the Swiss canton of Apenzell, where the local citizens gathered annually in the town to vote their own laws. Even that one bugbear of anarchist theory, the tyranny of public opinion decried by Orwell, had been deracinated, for the punishment of crime by public ridicule that had marked the buffalo hunt had been replaced in St. Laurent by fines of money.[73] The tragic disappearance of the Métis represented, in Woodcock's view, an indictment of the monolithic nature of Canadian federalism.[74]

Yet the polemical strain was secondary to the dominant aesthetic element. From the outset the book was more an imaginative tour de force than Woodcock's other biographies because the dearth of evidence about Dumont's life made his customary plethora of documentation impossible. He quoted diligently from the sources available, but much of his narrative had to be fabricated from hearsay and conjecture supplemented by speculation and invention; the book was, in fact, a fictional documentary, chock-full of novelistic techniques.[75] It had grown out of an imagined last meeting between Riel and Dumont, before the former stayed to face arrest and trial and the latter fled to a fugitive's life. For Woodcock the scene had symbolic resonances; he realized that Riel symbolized our "consciousness of deprivation and alienation from meaningful existence, our sense of rebellion without hope,"[76] and set out to replace him with a more inspiring symbol of action, courage, loyalty, honesty, and generosity.

Writing in the context of the oral tradition, Woodcock used gossip, rumour, myth, and legend to create his symbolic hero. He described Métis legends of Dumont's youthful bravery,[77] quoted a nameless source,[78] and so blurred distinctions between the veracious and the apocryphal that a few remarks became "a tradition."[79] There was a great deal of speculation about the consequences of Riel's military accidie, and about what successes Dumont might have gained if he had disobeyed his pietistic leader and taken charge of his own troops.[80] Yet he could only trust in Riel's prayers, for his tragic flaw was an "almost feudal sense of fealty."[81]

Dumont was cast in chiaroscuro by contrast not only with Riel, the ineffectual and eremetic visionary, but also with an array of villains who occupied the background of this tragic melodrama. Lawrence Clarke claimed that the independent laws of the buffalo hunt infringed upon his authority as local Justice of the Peace, and when decisions in Ottawa and Westminster proved him wrong, further exacerbated relations with the Métis.[82] The MacDonald government was blamed for a centralist and ethnocentric disregard of the Métis' petitions,[83] while on the Métis side there were the cowards Xavier Batoche and Charles Nolin, the latter a quisling who narrowly escaped being executed for treason by the Provisional Government.[84]

Gabriel Dumont was unique among Woodcock's biographies, a reminder that the entire genre exists curiously betwixt and between history and literature. In his Poetics Aristotle recognized the antagonistic claims of the real and imaginary, favouring poetry over history because it required a greater degree of invention. Accepting this legacy, some modern critics would find biography to be on a lower plane of achievement than truly imaginative literature. Woodcock would disagree; he would not think that Gabriel Dumont, because less tethered to fact than his other biographies and written in the histrionic and partisan tone of the storyteller rather than with the objectivity of the disinterested scholar, was necessarily a greater aesthetic accomplishment.

It is true, nevertheless, that Woodcock's biographies have too often bogged down in disquisitions on peripheral aspects of his subjects' ideas. It seems that his best studies - those of Orwell and Dumont - have benefited from an enforced paucity of research materials; in Dumont's case there were very few documents and in Orwell's many were withheld by his wife until recently.[85] His friendship with Orwell and a great imaginative leap in re-creating Dumont's character lent these works a greater vivacity, directness, and clarity. Just as Woodcock brought his prose to a finely honed perspicuity in emulating Orwell's style, his casual eloquence formed an evocative counterpoint to Dumont's legendary exploits.[86]

The radio play Six Dry Cakes for the Hunted (1977) was, unfortunately, merely a turgid repetition of the tone, themes, and mixture of fiction and documentary found in Gabriel Dumont, epitomizing the considerable degree of recycling in Woodcock's eclectic oeuvre, caused by constant financial pressures. The novelistic prestidigitation of the biography was, of course, absent, while its ideas were repeated in an awkwardly didactic manner. The central conflict between Dumont, the resolute leader of the buffalo hunt, and Riel, the alienated religious seer, was conveyed in halting and pretentious dialogue:

> Riel: Vision and action need each other, Gabriel. You are the man who acts.
>
> Jackson: You are the man who sees, Mr. Riel. You are the prophet, I recognize you.[87]

Woodcock's concern with the rights of minorities was voiced in Dumont's complaint that "the world is not interested in little peoples,"[88] and his view that Dumont and Riel had been pursuing impossible dreams was delivered by Father André, the avuncular priest of St. Laurent:

> My sons, neither of you sees the world as it is. You, Gabriel, are hankering after the old life of the prairie, but the death of the buffalo will prevent your ever returning. And you, Louis Riel, have filled your mind with heretical utopias which can never be fulfilled.[89]

When this kind of banal redundancy has been avoided, however, Woodcock's works have taken on the dramatic function of questioning and answering each other, of carrying on a gigantic conversation spanning his entire career. Often this debate with himself has been closely related to decisive actions in his life, so that texts and events must be understood as forming a continuity of statement and commitment. This interrelation marked his acquaintance with Tibetan refugees, which began during his travels in India between October, 1961 and January, 1962, when he encountered what he called "the shadow realm," the nation of refugees who had fled to northern India from Tibet in 1959 and after to avoid persecution by the Chinese. Granted an audience with the Dalai Lama at Pathankot (one of several very special experiences depicted in Woodcock's travels to which he gained entry by force of character, idealism, and an openness to other cultures) he and his wife divulged "our plans, which had been growing in our minds since we left Mussoorie, to found some kind of organization for aiding the Tibetans as soon as we returned to Canada."[90]

Woodcock did not simply act, however, without analysing the moral, psychological, and social contexts of his action. Within a year of his return to Canada he wrote a radio play examining the conundrum of charity in a capitalist society. The Benefactor was another of Woodcock's dramas of ideas, abandoning realism to present an intellectual conflict; the characters were ideas on legs and the setting was the symbolic Mammon City, part of a Utopia of the future.[91] The unctuous Simon Mercator, Chairman of the city's greatest corporation, had obtained a tithe from its profits to build a new wing on the City Infirmary, and was hailed as the Benefactor.

To accrue funds for this purpose, Mercator disputed the will of John Folbridge, preventing the money from going to his son, Irving, who wished to establish a theatre aimed at "stirring up the mind rather than curing the body." Mercator asked Irving's friend David to testify against him for the common good, but David refused to connive at his friend's destruction, retorting that "The general good is a pious lie." Soon afterward David's wife, Beatrice, terminated her affair with Mercator, decrying his abstract love for the poor and dearth of real passion. Chastened by these comments, Mercator returned Irving's inheritance, but the latter, insulted and enraged by this show of charity from a thief, shot the Benefactor.

The play's denouement was pronounced by Beatrice, who perceived that both Mercator and Irving Folbridge had been energumens in their respective commitments to the Good and the Beautiful. She concluded that "the innocent are always dreadful" because ignorant of "the long ambiguous coil of fear and guilt and liberation, and fear and guilt again, leading to freedom." Through the play Woodcock warned against an empty allegiance to abstractions, concurring with Wilde's view that charity is an affront to individual freedom and an avoidance of real social reform. He also recognized another truth that must have been extremely discomfiting for the fledgling philanthropist: that the innocence required for charitable ventures can hide an egotistical underside of Panglossian callousness and moral putrefaction.

This awareness of the dangerous presumption of those who seek to do good for others did not prevent Woodcock, however, from taking action. He and his wife kept their word to the Dalai Lama, raising some three million dollars from government and private sources over an eighteen year period. He attributed the success of their Tibetan Refugee Aid Society to the anarchist ideals of personal commitment, a minimum of bureaucracy, and the determining of needs and goals at the local level by the Tibetans themselves:

> A few volunteers in Vancouver and a handful of contacts in other Canadian cities, with a pool of willing workers to call on during fund-raising activities, have always been sufficient for the work we have had to do. Nor is it necessary to recruit an elaborate field staff; much more effective is a network of sympathetic and experienced people living in the area where relief or resettlement is going on. Even more important is a belief that the people one is helping know their needs better than any outsider and can put what they are given to effective use with a minimum of supervision.[92]

This chain of events illuminates the intimate relation between Woodcock's thought and action, and shows how he sustained his optimistic idealism by submitting his beliefs to his own irony and scepticism. While his anarchist ideals have always been weighted with a burden of reflective doubt and pessimism, he has maintained a steadfast loyalty to the same beliefs, which have formed a polemical undergirding beneath the fascinating surface of social life depicted in his travelogues and social histories.

Perhaps the chief target of Woodcock's persistent social criticisms has been imperialism. Having decried the "Two Nations" social structures of Mexico and Peru in his early travels, he renewed his depredations with _panache_ and a _soupçon_ of whimsical humour in _South Sea Journey_ (1976). In the New Caledonian capital of Nouméa he found the parasitic French government ensconced in the best district and the natives relegated to shacktown areas, noting that the French and other Europeans owned and operated the island's prosperous nickel industry, ravaging lands once possessed by the indigenous people.[93] After this "bogus high drama of a society based on a boom economy," the joint French-English condominium rule of the New Hebrides, its hybrid government and joint court involving ridiculous waste and inefficiency, struck Woodcock as "high musical comedy." "In typical New Hebridean style," he reported, the impartiality of the court "was guaranteed originally by the appointment to the Presidency of a deaf Spaniard who spoke neither French nor English."[94] Similarly, he found the poverty, over-population, and pollution of the Gilbert islands unchanged by British colonial officials, who were caricatures dedicated to maintaining a semblance of former imperial pomp.[95]

Woodcock had begun the task of cataloguing the evils of imperialism in a far less jocular manner. Several retrospective jeremiads against British imperial atrocities appeared in Freedom in the late forties. He noted that English sandalwood traders to the South Seas in the nineteenth century had massacred whole villages and introduced epidemic diseases as a handy means of thinning out the native population, and that when the sandalwood trade was replaced by sugar plantations they prospered on the strength of forced labour.[96] Observing the death throes of "the Empah," he warned that the British "liberation" of Burma from the Japanese would end only in establishing another corrupt colonial government.[97]

These criticisms were pursued in The British in the Far East: A Social History of the British Overseas (1969), wherein Woodcock described the terrible disparities within colonial societies. Soldiers and sailors were often pressed into service and lived miserable lives, but the captains of the great ships, the British East Indiamen, bought their posts at high prices and often accumulated fortunes through trade,[98] while army officers in nineteenth century China freely appropriated property and took concubines from among the native women - a practice that flourished sub rosa until the end of the century.[99] As one might have predicted, Woodcock portrayed British colonial societies as arrogant and conservative minorities in which intellectual and artistic life was strictly limited so that in invincible panoply of social cohesion could be presented to the great Asian masses below.[100] Social isolation nurtured illusions of impregnability, making the British in Hong Kong and Malaya unprepared for Japanese attack.[101]

These views were quite predictable, considering Woodcock's fundamental attitude to imperialism; indeed, the great weakness of his polemics has been their Gradgrinding single-mindedness. Knowing his polemical biases, one can predict accurately his arguments on any topic. This was true, for example, of his persistent suspicion that Christian missionaries were merely the supine appendages of imperial powers, preoccupied with the perks and appurtenances of their clerical offices, with little interest in the cultures of their charges or concern for their social problems. His 1948 essay on John G. Paton, the Scottish Presbyterian missionary to Erromanga and Tanna in the South Seas, described a devout man but a merciless cultural imperialist.[102] It is true that Woodcock was willing to applaud missionaries who did socially beneficial work, such as the Oblate Fathers who ran a residential school for Indian children near Vanderhoof, British Columbia,[103] or the Adventists of the Solomon Islands who supplemented their preaching with "a very generous emphasis upon good works."[104] Yet he was always watchful of *la trahison des clercs*, and so was incensed to discover that Father Donnelly of the Maryknoll Fathers near Peru's Lake Titicaca proposed to do nothing about the abysmal social conditions of the local Indians, defining his purpose as "the propagation of Catholic doctrine - nothing more."[105]

One could cite many more condemnations of imperialism and its missionary servants. Woodcock's one divagation from these relentless attacks was, unfortunately, a dully conventional work. *Who Killed the British Empire?* (1974) contained the unoriginal answer that the empire fell because of a confluence of moral, political, and economic forces and many individual wills. Among the pragmatic causes were the rising cost of military equipment and

Clement Atlee's preoccupation with transferring the country to a peacetime economy in the late forties.[106] Moral and ideological influences were the turning of world opinion against Britain's old-style patrician autocracies, and the expectation both in England and abroad that the colonies would achieve independence one day, taking control of the democratic institutions transplanted from English soil.[107] Colonial leaders, part of westernized and discontented intelligentsias created by British education, included Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya, Julius Nyerere of Nigeria, Gamel Abdul Nasser of Egypt, and of course Gandhi.

In this thorough but rather desultory *post mortem* on the empire, Woodcock was on the *terra cognita* of history, a surfeit of evidence precluding his love of venturesome speculation. His social histories have been most original and provocative when he has explored history's nether regions, as in his investigation of the presence of the Greeks in India for the thousand years from the sixth century B.C. to the fifth century A.D. *The Greeks in India* (1966) dealt in compelling and generally cogent hypotheses based upon interesting evidence and extensive reading. Tangible evidence of Bactrian-Chinese trade was discovered in "the coins and other objects made in Bactria and India from the natural nickel and copper alloy known as pai-t'ung which is found in the Chinese province of Yunnan."[108] Woodcock argued that Greek communities must have existed in India since 545 B.C., when Cyrus the Great of Persia carved out a single realm from the Hellespont to Afghanistan, for Alexander discovered them there in 334 B.C., and Arrian recorded their presence in the Swat Valley, now part of Pakistan.[109]

Speculations of this kind were made throughout his social histories and travelogues,[110] and were supported soundly. Woodcock was also inclined, however, to put forth equally debatable ideas in unexplained asides, in the manner of ex cathedra pronouncements. Repulsed by the attitude of the French "colons" of New Caledonia that they had built "la Grande Terre" and should govern it themselves, he suggested that since the Revolution the French have had "an ideological view of empire, a sense that since they have created the world's best culture, any man should regard it as a privilege to belong to it," whereas the English "gathered their possessions for simple reasons of trade or strategy, without having a real ideology of imperialism."[111] It seems that a dislike of French hauteur and a respect for English pragmatism led Woodcock to the ridiculous implication (which he has denied elsewhere) that English imperialism involved no sense of cultural superiority. Similarly, he made the obfuscating comment that national animosities have survived longer in Asia because Asians have "a much less acute historical sense" than westerners, "so that events which seem to us buried in an irrevocable past appear to many Asians as close as what happened a decade ago."[112] If Asians do have this awareness, it should have been called a more acute sense of history, and should have been explained by references to a broad range of cultural influences.

Such non sequiturs were contiguous with Woodcock's habit of making portentous or putatively esoteric generalizations which were in fact commonplaces. There was nothing especially trenchant in the assertion that Christian missionaries of the past generation have given to Asian and African peoples not their faith but the secular and materialistic values of their cultures.[113] It was a cliché of third-world politics that the people of developing nations prefer to obtain the technology and wealth of western countries than to trade their own religions for an alien one. Equally platitudinous was the comment that revolutions are "usually accompanied by a retreat toward conservatism in the arts."[114] Revolutionary régimes in Russia, Spain, and China (to name only a few) have sought to ensure their stability by making art a vehicle of propaganda.

Woodcock's travelogues and social histories have been marked by alternations between the erudition of the cognoscente and the sapience of the aficionado. A charming but facile impressionism pervaded Faces of India: A Travel Narrative (1964), wherein the author succumbed to the country's "temptations of the idiosyncratic and the particular," and uttered a hackneyed paean to this land of "everlasting eccentricity and contradiction."[115] He was enthralled, as countless travellers have been, by the marketplace at Darjeeling, one of the great crossroads of Asia; "The cobblers and the watchmakers were Chinese, the goldsmiths Burgalis; Tibetan merchants, Gurkha policemen, Sikh shopkeepers, European mountaineers, Lepcha women, slender Nepali girls in saris."[116] In a series of similar descriptions Woodcock praised India's "Dostoievskian irrationality and perpetual unexpectedness."[117] It was a portrait engaging in detail but bromidic in its simple contrasts of race and religion, ancient and modern.

The same was true of Asia, Gods and Cities: Aden to Tokyo (1966), which traced the expected rifts "between the modern and the ancient, the sophisticated and the primitive, the western and the eastern."[118] Lahore, the ancient home of the Moghuls, was decaying beneath "the restless vigour of a new city, modern, industrial, overcrowded, and somewhat frenetic,"[119] and the medieval Thai city of Cheing-Mai seemed like "a theatrical backdrop in traditional form to the drama of modern life,"[120] while amidst Kyoto's forest of factory chimneys the Zen Buddhist monks each morning raked their sand-gardens in forms symbolizing the condition of man - as they had done for centuries.[121]

In The Canadians (1979) Woodcock ignored his own warnings against thinking of the country's regional and pluralist diversity in terms of social stereotypes. "It is deceptively easy," he admitted, "to draw distinctions between the ways that the Prairie economy developed in the three provinces and affected the local human types,"[122] yet he suggested that the traditions of political and religious dissent gave the prairie-dweller "more than his due share of outrightness and individuality."[123] He pointed out that the legendary British Columbian who knew and cared nothing about Canada existed "only in the journalistic imagination,"[124] but re-created that mythical renegade by exalting the province's ethos of individualism and its history of colourful loggers, miners, and fishermen.[125] "The Maritimer," he mused, "makes a show of modesty, but only to mask great pride, concealed in the notion that he can always make a great deal from nothing. This gives him a somewhat superior, ironical view of life, and hence inclines him to acerbic forms of writing."[126] This last was indeed a far-fetched notion, for was it not more probable that the predilection for satire grew out of the bitterness of poverty, and that the Maritimers' pride was rooted in cultural attitudes, such as the Gaelic racial pride depicted in Hugh MacLennan's Each Man's Son?.

This indulgence in bromidic themes and stereotyped thinking was part of Woodcock's deliberate stance as a popularizer, the kind of social historian who turns his back on the nicer distinctions of academe and creates broad myth-engendering themes that will appeal to the public at large:

> Historians, in other words, not only present history. To a considerable degree, they make it, especially when their visions of past and present affect our hopes and even our sense of what is practicable in the future.... In every culture that is conscious of itself as a living, and therefore growing and declining entity, there are historians who play the kind of role I have been describing, and who work beside the more strictly academic gatherers and arrangers of facts. They are the controversial historians whose interpretations are often assailed, but whose grand co-ordinating visions help to shape the way a period or a people will regard itself by giving it a plausible past.[127]

This disparagement of academic historians as mere "gatherers and arrangers of facts" (paralleling Woodcock's view that academic literary critics followed a narrow and unimaginative textual approach) was accompanied by an insistence that historical writing was a creative endeavour. "For history, while its details can indeed be assembled with all the patience of a laboratory worker, can only be conceived in its entirety," Woodcock asserted, "through an act of imagination, and can only be brought to plausible life through the resources of the literary craft."[128]

The potential effects of this mythic kind of history with its "grand co-ordinating visions" were succinctly stated by Woodcock; it may promote public controversy and thereby stimulate a better awareness of the past, or it may even "shape the way a period or a people will regard itself." The great weakness of such visions is, however,

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that they most often simplify history, as Herbert Butterfield argued in his The Whig Interpretation of History. While allowing that the historian must apprehend the past imaginatively, Butterfield showed that the English Whigs of the nineteenth century failed in this effort because they halted "the work of imaginative sympathy at a point that could almost be fixed by a formula."[129] This was precisely the fault with Woodcock's own myth of libertarian regionalism,[130] with its motifs of decentralism, pluralism, and regional diversity. These themes were in some cases convincing and informative because weighed carefully against other cultural influences and historical evidence, but in others they were poorly supported, dogmatic, and tepidly familiar.

An instance combining perspicacity with a diligent presentation of evidence was Woodcock's portrait of the "uniquely complex system of Hindu castes and non-Indian religions"[131] found in the southern Indian province of Kerala. The Malayalis or native Keralans were, he demonstrated, more independent and better educated and therefore more politically volatile than other Indians.[132] Other differences included anarchist tendencies expressed by local social and religious leaders and in myths such as that of King Mahibali, who is said to have ruled over Kerala when all men were equal and no man was poor, and who would return one day to re-establish his mythic kingdom.[133] From a thorough account of Keralan history and folk legend

Woodcock constructed a striking but credible impression of the Malayali character:

> Perhaps Nehru went too far in describing the Malayalis as intellectual anarchists, but emotional anarchists they certainly are, as emphatically as the Spaniards, with all the anarchist's strange mixture of conservatism and rebellion, with all his double yearnings for the golden age of the past and the libertarian paradise of the future, with all his flaming discontent with what is present. Like the anarchists, they have a strong feeling for local and communal loyalties, but, also like them, they can be inspired by universal visions.[134]

As might have been expected, the social life of The Doukhobors (1977) also attracted Woodcock's anarchist gaze. He recorded that the Doukhobors were pacifists and communists who rejected all authority of church and state, chiliasts who spurned liturgy, icons, sacraments, church marriages, and all the trappings of formal religion, governing and worshipping in frequent communal meetings which enacted direct democracy. Yet he showed a balanced perspective in recognizing that the Doukhobors vested absolute power in their leaders, who were presumed to inherit their charisma and prophetic vision from their ancestors.[135] These manifestations of deity were inclined, Woodcock observed, to abuses of worldly power: Peter Kalmykov was preoccupied with ostentatious display and riotous living; his son, Peter the Lordly Verigin, who brought the Doukhobors to Canada, took up "a satrapal way of life"; and Verigin's son, Peter the Purger (so named for his attempts to expel the radical Sons of Freedom from the sect) was suspected of embezzling the group's funds.[136]

The same balance between an insistent anarchist perspective and a scrupulous sense of objectivity marked Peoples of the Coast (1977). Woodcock argued that the Indian tribes of the west coast had "a combination of highly developed culture with barely developed political concepts," but admitted that "the aboriginal culture was no more ideal than any other."[137] He approved of the fact that the Salish of the southern coast had "no formal mechanism to check dissent" whereas the northern tribes (the Kwakiutl, Tsimshian, Haida, and Tlingit) had rigid power structures and "a clan-dominated competitive value system."[138] Woodcock managed to attend a Salish spirit dance, and distinguished the tribe's means of seeking spiritual insight through isolation, fasting, and self-flagellation from the more sophisticated simulation of this quest in Kwakiutl religious ritual:

> The drama of the Mass: the drama of the Hamatsa society. Quite apart from the common element of ritual cannibalism, each represented a secularization of the true spiritual impulse and each achieved a notable level of aesthetic achievement, which is the collective equivalent of individual spiritual insight.[139]

Underlying this statement were two assumptions central to Woodcock's anarchist thought: first, the mystical view that the "true spiritual impulse" comes from the individual, and second, the Romantic attitude that art is the expression of that impulse.

Such sound and judicious reasoning did not, however, distinguish Woodcock's application of his libertarian regionalist vision to the larger Canadian polity. In advocating decentralism and opposing nationalism he abandoned well-documented argument, resorting instead to prolix exhortations. He endorsed the federal system, but added that "it will be ultimately successful only when the central government is reduced to a co-ordinating committee between autonomous regions."[140] There was no further discussion of the pros and cons of regional autonomy; Woodcock seems to have assumed that the idea of decentralism carried an axiomatic truth. Similarly, he proffered his asseveration that Canada is not a state but a "dynamic political continuum," warning that "Any attempt to tidy it up into a centralized nation-state would bring its immediate disintegration."[141] Nothing more was said; he offered no proofs that the country would collapse if centralism progressed, nor did he disprove rationally the view that Canada *is* a conventional nation-state. With the palaver of the soap-box orator, Woodcock sought to convince his audience through a high pitch of idealistic fervour rather than through a rational and pragmatic approach to the issue.

The emotional contagion of polemical rhetoric also infected his factitious distinctions between regionalism and centralism. "For the regionalist," he proclaimed in Confederation Betrayed: The Case Against Trudeau's Canada (1981), "land is the living environment, a 'place to stand on,' where the boundaries are drawn by tradition and personal feeling as much as by geography; for the centralist it is a map where the boundaries are drawn by the will to power."[142] This misleading statement inferred that national loyalties do not grow out of tradition and personal feeling, and that regionalists are magically untainted by the will to power. Yet the book's very existence contradicted these implications, for Confederation Betrayed was written as a protest against the dominant tradition of centralism in Canadian history (a tradition that must have had, therefore, some hold upon the "personal feelings" of Canadians), and to urge the provinces to increase their powers by insisting upon their right to secede from Canada, as the Parti Québecois had done in Quebec.[143]

Also spurious was the argument put forward in The Meeting of Time and Space: Regionalism in Canadian Literature (1980) that "the special character of Canada is that of a symbiotic union of regions, as organic as a coral reef, rather than a centralized state constructed according to abstract political concepts."[144] There is no reason to believe that regionalism is inherently "organic" and nationalism "abstract" and "political." Both attitudes or forces have fostered political developments throughout the country's history, and any growth of regional powers that occurs in the future will be a political phenomenon. (It is, of course, the "anti-political" nature of anarchism that makes it utterly impracticable and other-worldly, for there have been few if any human societies without some structure of power.) Nor should one accept Woodcock's *a priori* implication that regionalism is on the side of passion and centralism on the side of abstraction; indeed, it would seem far more likely that both have involved a mixture of feeling and cerebration. Also, though this cannot be determined without extensive research, it is probable that both attitudes have been equally "organic" expressions of the will of the people.

Passion seems to have overcome reason in Woodcock's attempts to disparage nationalism by declaring that the world is now entering what Northrop Frye called a "post-nationalist consciousness."[145] In *The Meeting of Time and Space* (1980) he stated that "a confederation is something quite different from the long-outdated nation-state that developed in eighteenth-century Europe,"[146] and a year later in *Confederation Betrayed* hoped "that our country might succeed Switzerland as a model of confederalism in a world that is seeking alternatives to the outdated and highly dangerous nation-state."[147] Yet the fact that in all of Woodcock's writing only Switzerland is cited as a model of confederalism would suggest that the nation-state is far from defunct. Fourteen years earlier he had admitted that the post-nationalist age had not yet dawned in remarking that Asia's greatest political problem was the proliferation of bellicose nationalisms among new countries, adding with blind dogmatism that "The old countries of the west invented nationalism, and seem to be on the verge of abandoning it."[148] Woodcock presented no evidence that Greece, Spain, Italy, France, or England were becoming less nationalistic, and indeed it would be difficult to support such an argument.

This was certainly not the case in the United States, where, as Woodcock observed in 1968, the nation-state was thriving:

> The reason why I fear and dislike America as a political entity is that, by a combination of historical circumstances and constitutional errors, it has become far more menacing to its own people and to the outer world than Canada can or ever will be. America's strengths as a state are its gravest flaws; Canada's weaknesses as a state are its greatest virtues.[149]

The dangers of American imperialism have disturbed Woodcock throughout his career. In Ravens and Prophets (1952) he recounted the tirades of British Columbians against the Yankees who were exploiting the province's oil resources and killing off its game.[150] In 1968 he urged Canadian political leaders to throw off their sycophantic acceptance of American policies by denouncing nuclear arms, NORAD, NATO, and the war in Vietnam,[151] and in 1970 found Canada in the "intolerable dilemma" of needing American investment yet fearing retaliation if measures were taken to dislodge American control of the Canadian economy.[152]

These views placed Woodcock in the precarious position of agreeing with Canadian nationalists whom he found repellent; therefore, when in 1975 he bade a joyous farewell to the Canadian tax privileges granted to *Time* and *Reader's Digest*, he appended the disclaimer that he was not a "fanatical mouth-frothing nationalist."[153] When Robin Mathews sought to have the American Warren Tallman ejected from the selection committee for the Governor General's Awards, Woodcock saw the incident as an example of nationalist asperity carried to the point of farce. He called Mathews a "tireless comedian," execrating the "Compleat Nationalists" for their inhumane blend of "arid legalism and emotional violence."[154] Mathews later pursued his invidious campaign against the hegemony of foreign academics in Canadian universities, accusing Woodcock of being a "former Englishman," and Woodcock riposted by drawing attention to his Canadian birthright, calling Mathews an "uninformed xenophobe" and a "chronic mythologist."[155]

These imprecations were well-founded, for Mathews allowed unbridled nationalism to run rampant in his literary criticisms. He vilified W.J. Keith, critical biographer of Charles G.D. Roberts, for being an Oxford alumnus who treated the Father of Canadian Poetry with "imperial condescension," and denied the value of Keith's attempt to place Roberts in the international context of poetry written in English.[156] Applying George Grant's ideas in his own dogmatic way, Mathews decried Canadian writers whom he judged to be exponents of the American liberalist ethos. The "major tradition" of the Canadian novel was described as comprising only authors who found in Canadian society an auspicious balance between American lawlessness and British allegiance to authority.[157] Irving Layton was dubbed "an advertising man for the philosophy of greed" because of his egotism and portrayals of women as sexual objects.[158] The heat of his contumely not only warped Mathews' reason but also disfigured his prose, lending it a canting ugliness: "materialist, capitalist, individualist society has moved increasingly," he thundered, "towards exploitation in erotic, sensationalist terms."[159]

Despite this doctrinal truculence, Mathews and his nationalist colleague James Steele have been very astute in dissecting the arguments of anti-nationalists. Mathews discerned that Frye's post-nationalism was in effect a capitulation to American imperialism, as was his equation of American dominance with the inescapable trend toward global technological uniformity.[160] Steele asserted that Frye, by viewing literature as a self-referential pattern of mythic structures, abstracted the art from social realities, relegating nations to the function of providing images for the autonomous poetic mind.[161]

Though their critical stances as academic and public critics have been antithetical, Frye and Woodcock have arrived independently at the conclusion that the world is entering a post-nationalist phase, and that an enhanced regionalism is the order of the day. Underlying Frye's commitment to Canadian regionalism was a naive assumption that cultural issues could be divorced from political ones:

> Regionalism is an inevitable part of the maturing of a culture like ours.... the conception of Canada doesn't really make all that much sense. 'Canada' is a political entity; the cultural counterpart of what we call Canada is really a federation not of provinces but of regions and communities.[162]

The same fallacy was apparent in Woodcock's vacillation on Canada's economic relations with the United States. He insisted that Canada adopt more independent political policies, but was resigned to American economic and cultural dominance; "Economically and culturally, the flow goes on between the two countries, whatever their political differences, and that is inevitable."[163] Both men regarded culture as sacrosanct and politics as a priori gross and worldly. In Frye's case the error was rooted in a deliberate withdrawal from social reality, and in Woodcock's it sprang from the reducto ad absurdum of his absolute rejection of the political world.

This anarchist rejection of politics was completely devoid of a practical dimension. In his 1972 article, "Up the Anti-Nation," Woodcock proposed a "rigorous devolution of power" in the Canadian federal system, involving localized industry, a simpler existence, and a lower standard of living.[164] Yet he did not explain how Canadians would be persuaded to sacrifice the known benefits of an unlimited technology and a high standard of living for the ascetic virtues of a more communal life. Such atavistic thinking ignored the realities of a capitalist economy in a developed country. Woodcock forgot his more realistic comments on decentralism, such as his 1969 strictures that "The soils most favourable to the spread of decentralism are probably countries like India, where rural living still predominates, countries like Japan where the decentralization of factories and the integration of agricultural and industrial economies have already been recognized as a necessity for survival."[165]

Several articles answering "Up the Anti-Nation," published under the title Nationalism or Local Control: Responses to George Woodcock (1973), took umbrage with Woodcock's arguments for decentralism. Bruce Hodgins adduced examples of the hebetude and prejudice of local authorities in Canada, and Patrick McFadden noted a study which portrayed local government in France as "a bunch of local yokels talking about nothing."[166] Frank Cassidy insisted that Canada must be a strong nation in order to survive in a world of "mercantilist internationalism," and D.I. Davies felt that Woodcock's outlook was ahistorical, overlooking the country's history of colonialism which taught that independence was to be fought for and hard-won.[167]

These very sound objections confuted Woodcock's other-worldly anarchist idealism when applied to Canada; yet, his libertarian regionalism did inform some cogent social criticisms. He presented a well-documented case that since 1879 the protective tariff had stunted economic growth in the west and the Maritimes by forcing hinterland regions to pay high prices and transportation rates for tariff-protected goods manufactured in Ontario and Quebec.[168] American corporate influence and federal power-mongering had conspired to the detriment of British Columbia, he demonstrated thoroughly, in determining the ownership and status of the British Columbia Telephone Corporation, and in shaping the Columbia River Treaty.[169] Polemical goals led Woodcock too far, however, in derogating all aspects of the nation-state. Opposing the tendencies of the centralists to paint regionalism as a divisive "balkanizing" force, he went to the opposite extreme, condemning _prima facae_ a number of federal powers and institutions.[170] He went so far as to suggest that the Canadian armed forces should be disbanded because they were maintained only out of the federal government's "fear of ethnically or regionally based revolt."[171] These depredations on the _status quo_ involved no explanation of how the needs for internal order and protection against external aggression would be regulated within the "anti-nation." Woodcock seems to have assumed that these problems would fade away with the withering of the state.

Another aspect of Woodcock's polemical view of Canadian culture and history was his biographical approach, derived from the anarchist doctrine that men direct history as opposed to the Marxist assumption that material conditions shape individual beliefs and accomplishments. "History is," he asserted, "merely the record of what happens when many individual wills react to a given set of circumstances."[172] This biographical emphasis was gaining force within Canadian historical writing during the fifties when Woodcock became interested in the past of his new homeland. In The Writing of Canadian History: Aspects of English-Canadian Historical Writing: 1900-1970 (1976), Carl Berger recorded that Canadian historians of the fifties found in biography an answer to the then dominant view of history as the sway of impersonal social and economic forces, a means of fulfilling their desire for a "more intimate, human, and vivid experience of the past."[173] Donald Creighton heralded the change when he declared in 1945 that "History is not made from inanimate forces and human automatons: it is made by living men and women, impelled by an endless variety of ideas and emotions, which can best be understood by that insight into character, that imaginative understanding of people which is one of the great attributes of the literary art."[174]

Woodcock embraced Creighton's view of history as a literary art, but the two were incompatible on important questions of content. Creighton rebelled against the attitude of the Whig historians that the Liberal Party was responsible for most of the nation's progress, creating in turn his own progressivist myth of a Canada dominated by a strong central government and merchant community in which farmers and reformers who resisted these forces were depicted as reactionary or ridiculous.[175] An ardent Conservative, he aggrandized Tory achievements such as the building of the Canadian Pacific Railroad and the consolidation of power in the hands of English commercial interests, celebrating John A. MacDonald and deflating MacKenzie King, approving of the Tory centralist R.B. Bennett and dismissing the defender of provincial rights, Oliver Mowat.

One could hardly imagine a point of view more starkly opposed to Woodcock's libertarian regionalism, in which all centralists, Tory or Whig, MacDonald and Trudeau alike, were decried as enemies of cultural plurality and local patriotism. The central figures in his biographical chronicle were not the wealthy and powerful of the nation, but the leaders of imperilled or vanishing peoples: the Verigins, the Indian chiefs of the west coast, or Gabriel Dumont, heroic leader of a small people in an almost forgotten era. Even his short biography of Amor de Cosmos focused not on the man's minor role in the long march toward Confederation, but on the way he typified the raw energy, grandiose dreams, and machismo of populist British Columbian society, on his embodiment of the spirit of his region rather than his contribution to the creation of the state.

This approach emerged with symbolic clarity in Woodcock's vignettes of One Hundred Great Canadians (1980), among whom were Tecumseh, Piapot, Poundmaker, and other Indian chiefs who defended their beliefs and customs against the Juggernaut of white culture.[176] Also included was a pleiade of flamboyant adventurers: the eccentric Jack Miner dropped out of high-school to become a famous naturalist; Archibald Stansfield Belaney or "Grey Owl" was "one of the true pioneers of modern environmentalism"; the bush pilot Punch Dickens helped to open up Canada's north; and the mountain climber Conrad Kain accomplished the first ascent of Mount Robson in 1913.[177] Women of the pantheon were not only the obvious choices like Agnes McPhail and Emily Gowan Murphy, but also Ella Cora Hind, an enterprising businesswoman and reporter in turn-of-the-century Manitoba, Martha Louise Black, who left the cosseted life of high society in Chicago to join the Klondike gold rush and forged a life of prosperity and elegance in the Yukon, and Catherine Schubert who, though pregnant, travelled the rough overland route to the Cariboo with her husband and three children.[178]

This idiosyncratic compendium presented Woodcock's conviction that Canadian history was really made by a variety of unsung heroes and heroines of all classes and races, and that historians should be concerned with their diverse contributions. Just as he wrote about people who were not the acknowledged winners of Canadian history, he studied the dwindling peoples of the country, giving a voice to the losers of history who had been excluded from standard progressivist accounts because, as George Grant commented, "belief in progress often implies the base assumption that to lose is to fail to have grasped the evolving truth."[179] In this laudable effort, Woodcock's goal was to prevent intolerance and repression by promoting the acceptance of racial and cultural differences.

The pluralist ideal of a peaceful co-existence between peoples also inspired Canada and the Canadians (1970) wherein Woodcock recorded important historical incidents of racial prejudice against Chinese, Japanese, Sikhs, Jews, Mennonites, and Hutterites.[180] He pointed out that the accepted nomenclature of "founding peoples" for the English and French and "native peoples" for the Indians and Inuit carried the degrading inference that the latter were merely part of the natural flora and fauna, and took no part in building the nation.[181] Defying the élitism of the bicultural illusion, which he called a "gross travesty of the real cultural multiplicity of Canada,"[182] he praised Indian and Inuit art and architecture, and celebrated the cultural diversity brought to the country by Germans, Ukrainians, Idelanders, and many others. Lamenting the near-disappearance of the Hutterite, Mennonite, Indian, Métis, and Doukhobor cultures, he argued that in the best democracy minorities would be allowed "to flourish, even at some expense to the patience of the majority."[183] The same theme dominated The Doukhobors (1977); documenting the sect's gradual withering over two centuries of persecution in Russia and Canada, Woodcock and co-author Ivan Avakumovic asked, "How well has a democracy succeeded when it has failed to reconcile its most extreme dissenters?"[184]

These indictments of xenophobia should be heeded by Canadians, as should Woodcock's warning that the great challenge facing Canadian culture lies in abandoning "the illusion that uniformity and unity are the same thing and equally desirable," and accepting the fact that Canada's very nature is its "many-faceted diversity."[185] The strength of his anarchist polemics has been in social criticisms of this kind, whether of racial prejudice, class disparities, imperialism, or of missionaries, politicians, and all individuals who acquiesce in these injustices out of complacency and self-interest. Though repeated with Gradgrinding dullness, such comments have been consistent and, one hopes, socially astringent in their effects. Yet Woodcock has ignored his own caveat that anarchists should strive to be practical in applying their ideals; ascending to the vertiginous heights of anarchist theory, he has pronounced his libertarian regionalist vision of Canada with oracular blindness to its practical impediments. Contiguous with his polemical stance and his apostasy from academic doctrine, he has indulged in the impressionism and simplifying historical myths of the popularizer, and in the autodidact's bias against academic critics and historians. While these hortatory excesses have been relieved by a sprinkling of rhodomontade and restrained by biographical objectivity, one cannot help wishing that Woodcock's consistency and self-criticism might have survived unscathed by his polemical tenacity.

NOTES

1. George Woodcock, The Writer and Politics: Essays (London: Porcupine Press, 1948), p. 11.

2. John Wain, "George Orwell," Essays on Literature and Ideas (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1966), p. 181.

3. George Woodcock, "En Couleur de Rose," rev. of Laurier by Joseph Schull, Canadian Literature, No. 28 (Spring, 1966), pp. 62-65.

4. George Woodcock, "About Biographies," Canadian Literature, No. 36 (Spring, 1968), p. 4.

5. Woodcock, "En Couleur de Rose," CL, p. 64.

6. George Woodcock, Herbert Read: The Stream and the Source (London: Faber, 1972), p. 11.

7. Peter Hughes, George Woodcock (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1974), p. 10.

8. George Woodcock, "Distant Forbears," rev. of: Saint Louis, by M.W. Laberge; God Have Mercy: The Life of John Fisher of Rochester, by Michael Macklem; and Calvin and the Libertines of Geneva, by R.W. Collins: Canadian Literature, No. 37 (Summer, 1968), p. 82.

9. George Woodcock, "En Couleur de Rose," CL, p. 62.

10. Woodcock, "En Couleur de Rose," CL, p. 63.

11. James L. Clifford, From Puzzles to Portraits: Problems of a Literary Biographer (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1970), p. 85.

12. George Woodcock, "The World of Time: Notes towards an Autobiography," Aurora: New Canadian Writing 1980, ed. Morris Wolfe (Toronto: Doubleday, 1980), p. 252.

13. George Woodcock, The Crystal Spirit: A Study of George Orwell (Boston: Little, Brown, 1966), pp. 21-24.

14. Woodcock, Orwell, pp. 115, 118.

15. Woodcock, Orwell, pp. 106, 111, 81.

16. Woodcock, Orwell, p. 292.

17. Harold Nicolson, "The Practice of Biography," The English Sense of Humour and other Essays (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1968), p. 153.

18. Woodcock, Orwell, p. 201.

19. Raymond Williams, Orwell (London: Fontana, 1971), p. 78.

20. Woodcock, Orwell, pp. 220-221, 82-83.

21. Williams, Orwell, p. 80.

22. Williams, Orwell, pp. 80-81.

23. John Gross, The Rise and Fall of the Man of Letters (London: Macmillan, 1969), p. 264.

24. Woodcock, Orwell, pp. 196-197.

25. Woodcock, Orwell, p. 197.

26. Woodcock, Orwell, p. 354.

27. Woodcock, Orwell, p. 312.

28. Woodcock, Orwell, p. 285.

29. Woodcock, Orwell, p. 53.

30. Woodcock, Orwell, p. 311.

31. Woodcock, Orwell, p. 28.

32. Woodcock, Orwell, p. 232.

33. Woodcock, Orwell, p. 240.

34. Woodcock, Orwell, p. 238.

35. Woodcock, Orwell, p. 55.

36. Woodcock, Orwell, p. 4.

37. George Orwell, "Politics versus Literature: An Examination of Gulliver's Travels," The Collected Essays, Journalism, and Letters of George Orwell, ed. Sonia Orwell and Ian Angus (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970), p. 253.

38. George Woodcock, "Utopias: Pro and Con," four tape cassettes, CBC Learning Systems, 1973.

Samuel Holton Monk made this distinction very clearly in "The Pride of Lemuel Gulliver," Eighteenth Century English Literature: Modern Essays in Criticism, ed. James L. Clifford (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), p. 127:

"Gulliver looks into the obscene abyss of human nature, unlighted by the frail light of reason and of morality, and the sight drives him mad.

Repelled by what he sees, he, not Swift, identifies the Yahoos with man; and he, not Swift, turns misanthrope. Since he will not be a Yahoo, he seeks to become, as nearly as possible, a Houyhnhnm."

39. Orwell, "Reflections on Gandhi," Collected Essays, Vol. IV, p. 527.

40. Orwell, "Gandhi," CEJL, Vol. IV, p. 527.

41. Woodcock, Orwell, p. 238.

42. George Woodcock, Dawn and the Darkest Hour: A Biographical Study of Aldous Huxley (London: Faber, 1972), p. 24.

43. Woodcock, Huxley, pp. 170, 22.

44. Woodcock, Huxley, p. 60.

Woodcock might also have noted that Huxley's tendency to offer answers rather than posing problems in his fiction emerged in the Foreword to Brave New World (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1955), p. 8. Huxley stated that if he were to rewrite the novel he would offer the Savage a third anarchic alternative, a community where economics would be "decentralist and Henry-Georgian, politics Kropotkinesque and co-operative," and "science and technology would be used as though, like the Sabbath, they had been made for man, not... as though man were to be adapted and enslaved to them." This would have been, however, an artistic disaster, making the novel merely a tendentious outline of a political Utopia.

45. Woodcock, Huxley, p. 278.

Huxley abandoned his critical and ironical perspective to such an extent that ideas he had satirized in Brave New World were supported as aspects of Island's ideal society. Like the people of the Brave New World, his islanders were brainwashed by hypnopaedia, and kept politically quiescent by means of drugs, while neuroses were prevented by the abolition of families, a notion that had been lacerated with authorial irony when advanced by Mustapha Mond in the earlier anti-Utopia(Brave New World, p. 41):

> "Our Freud had been the first to reveal the appalling dangers of family life. The world was full of fathers - was therefore full of misery; full of mothers - therefore of every kind of perversion from sadism to chastity; full of brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts - full of madness and suicide."

46. Woodcock, Huxley, p. 284.

47. Woodcock, Huxley, p. 62.

48. Woodcock, Huxley, pp. 36, 265.

49. Woodcock, Huxley, pp. 44, 40-41, 37, 146.

50. Woodcock, Huxley, p. 265.

51. Woodcock, Huxley, pp. 265-267.

In his letter to Doug Fetherling, dated 4th November, 1972, Taking it to the Letter (Montreal: Quadrant, 1981), p. 34, Woodcock stated that Huxley simply did not share the experience of mystics: "He was not a phony. He was just trying hard for something that wasn't in his nature." He asserted that since Huxley was not a real mystic, this made "his claims for mysticism as a means to world peace etc., presumptuous and absurd."

52. George Woodcock, Herbert Read: The Stream and the Source (London: Faber, 1972), pp. 165-166.

Woodcock explained that Read was influenced by Ruskin's philosophical manner of combining the study of art with radical social criticisms, by Wilde's belief that we perceive in nature what art has taught us to find, and by Morris's principle that art and industry must be balanced so that men can live integrated lives.

53. Woodcock, Read, pp. 230, 22, 30.

54. Woodcock, Read, p. 69.

55. Woodcock, Read, pp. 76-77.

56. Woodcock, Read, p. 143.

57. Woodcock, Read, p. 131.

58. George Woodcock, "Three Great Russians: Biography for Our Time and for no Time," Sewanee Review, Vol. LXXXV, No. 2 (April-June, 1977), pp. 325-326.

59. George Woodcock, Into Tibet, The Early British Explorers (London: Faber, 1971), p. 216.

60. Woodcock, Into Tibet, p. 198.

61. Woodcock, Into Tibet, pp. 80, 99.

62. George Woodcock, Amor de Cosmos: Journalist and Reformer (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 15.

63. Woodcock, De Cosmos, p. viii.

64. Woodcock, De Cosmos, p. 74.

This pattern of behaviour was illuminated much more clearly and perceptively in the context of the life of the gold rush (De Cosmos, pp. 72-73):

"The pattern is in fact not an uncommon one among men of his period and his peculiar kind of existence. He was, after all, largely shaped by the experience of gold-rush life in California, and gold miners tend, like him, to be men at once gregarious and solitary. At the height of a gold-rush they have little chance of privacy; everything is done in the open, even though it is done for private gain. But there are times of prospecting exploration when a man may be alone with himself for long periods, and the number of gold miners who, as De Cosmos did, remained unmarried and retired into a solitary, eccentric and apparently aimless old age is notable. De Cosmos differed only in that for him the great public excitement and private passion was not gold but politics."

65. George Woodcock, Henry Walter Bates, Naturalist of the Amazons (London: Faber, 1969), p. 255.

In the spring of 1861 Bates, aged thirty-seven, made a liaison with a twenty-two-year-old country-town girl and in February of 1862 she gave birth to a daughter. The couple did not marry until January, 1863. The only comment Woodcock offered on the subject was the following:

> "Bates appears to have carried to Leicester the permissive morals of the Amazons. It may well also be that his appreciation of the qualities of the illiterate women of the tropics led him to choose a completely untutored girl for his mistress and later his wife."

66. Woodcock, Bates, p. 151.

67. Woodcock, Mohandas Gandhi (New York: Viking Press, 1971), pp. 87-88.

68. Woodcock, Gandhi, p. 73.

69. Woodcock, Gandhi, p. 110.

70. Woodcock, Gandhi, p. 114.

Woodcock also recognized that Gandhi had very little influence in lessening caste distinctions in India, and in creating peace and mutual respect between the country's religious communities (pp. 112-113). He admitted that Gandhi's principle of nonviolent resistance could be useful in combatting dictatorship but not in resisting the atom bomb (pp. 114-115), and that his teachings did not take account of the realities of modern urban life (p. 113).
When he visited India in 1961 (see Faces of India: A Travel Narrative, London: Faber, 1964) Woodcock reported that the few villages that had adopted Gandhian reforms were indeed healthier and wealthier (pp. 89-92), but he found that Gandhi had become a symbol invoked at will by all political parties (p. 162), and that Gandhi's beliefs had not changed the deeply paternalistic structure of power in India (pp. 80-82, 214).

71. George Woodcock, Gabriel Dumont: The Métis Chief and his Lost World (Edmonton: Hurtig, 1975), p. 92.

72. Woodcock, Dumont, p. 36.

73. Woodcock, Dumont, pp. 95, 99.

74. Woodcock, Dumont, p. 19.

75. In an interview conducted by Geoff Hancock, Canadian Fiction Magazine, Nos. 30/31 (1979), pp. 142-143, Woodcock recalled writing three failed novels between

1937 and 1950, commenting that "my abandonment of the novel and the short story did not mean that I entirely abandoned the fictional mode; even being a failed novelist taught me how to shape the raw material of travel books into a comely narrative, what to leave out, what to exaggerate, what to invent, and how to handle character and dialogue." Undoubtedly this experience contributed a great deal to the writing of Gabriel Dumont.

76. Woodcock, Gabriel Dumont, p. 15.

77. Woodcock, Gabriel Dumont, pp. 51-52, 66-69.

78. Woodcock, Dumont, p. 250.

The statement quoted was representative of the larger-than-life tone of many others, and indeed of the narrative itself:
"'When he speaks with animation, when he talks of his feats of arms,' said one nameless man who saw Gabriel not long before his death, 'there emerges, out of his mouth which opens with a strange contraction of the lower jaw, a voice that echoes like a rolling barrel, a voice that would carry to thousands of men gathered on plains as vast as his courage. Everything in this man is large, the sentiments and the heart as much as the physical solidity and the alert intelligence.'"

79. Woodcock, Dumont, p. 231.

Speculating on whether Dumont attempted to return to Canada in the summer and early autumn of 1885 to attempt to rescue Riel from the Regina jail, Woodcock wrote: "There were legends that Dumont even penetrated into Canada; a Regina paper reported his presence in that city, and there is even a tradition that he ventured back to Batoche." The words "legend" and "tradition" were used very loosely here, with no specific information about what amount of opinion or reportage they suggested.

80. Woodcock pointed out that if the Métis had followed Dumont's advice and attacked Fort Carlton on the 23 March, 1885, "there is a fair probability that the ill-defended positions of Fort Carlton and Prince Albert would have been taken without difficulty, with Battleford to follow shortly afterwards." (p. 170) Also, if the Métis had not wasted four days in burying their dead after the Battle of Duck Lake on March 25, they might have ambushed and wiped out Irvine's column as it fled from Fort Carlton to Prince Albert (p. 179).

81. Woodcock, Dumont, p. 191.

82. Woodcock, Dumont, pp. 106, 110, 139, 164.

83. Woodcock, Dumont, pp. 125-131.

84. Woodcock, Dumont, pp. 166, 156, 168, 175.

85. Bernard Crick, "Orwelliana," rev. of George Orwell: A Personal Memoir by T.R. Fyvel, New Statesman (17 September, 1982), p. 20.
Crick stated that "the so-called Complete Essays, Journalism, and Letters are not complete. Sonia thought that much of his early journalism and some of the fulminations of his revolutionary socialist period from 1936-1941 didn't come up to scratch; perhaps not, but they are part of his life."

86. This deliberate understatement was very apposite, as can be seen in Woodcock's calmly elegiac descriptions of Dumont's near-death and his actual death:

"He wandered back to Dakota, living in Métis hunting camps, and it was there that, one night in 1891, he was attacked as he lay in his tent by a would-be assassin. Stabbed in the head and body, his hand cut to the bone through seizing his assailant's knife, Gabriel still managed to hold his attacker until people arrived from the other tents, and then, characteristically, let him go, and the man fled into the night" (p. 247).

Never ill a day in his life, Dumont complained of pains in his chest and arms on a hunting trip to Basin Lake near Batoche:
"On Saturday, 19 May, 1906, he went again for a walk. When he returned, he went into Alexis' house and asked for a bowl of soup. He sat down, ate a few mouthfuls, and then, without speaking, he walked across to a bed in the room and crumpled onto it. His death was like the flash of his gun, sudden, accurate, and - since one must die - merciful" (p. 251).

87. George Woodcock, "Six Dry Cakes for the Hunted," Two Plays (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1977), p. 84.
The play first appeared as Gabriel Dumont and the Northwest Rebellion (Toronto: Playwrights Co-Op, 1976).

88. Woodcock, "Six dry Cakes," Two Plays, p. 63.

89. Woodcock, "Six dry Cakes," Two Plays, p. 93.

90. George Woodcock, Faces of India: A Travel Narrative (London: Faber, 1964), p. 131.

91. George Woodcock, The Benefactor, dir. by Gerald Newman for CBC's Wednesday Night, 17 October, 1962.
All references are to the recording of the play held at the CBC Radio Archive, 90 Sumach Street, Toronto, Ontario.

92. George Woodcock, "Letter from Vancouver: Tibetans and Other Refugees," NeWest Review, Vol. 5, No. 8 (April, 1980), p. 14.

93. George Woodcock, South Sea Journey (Toronto: Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 1976), pp. 191, 197.

94. Woodcock, South Sea Journey, pp. 213, 215, 217.

95. Woodcock, South Sea Journey, pp. 144-145.

The touches of levity that mark Woodcock's travel books and social histories and contribute to their complexity of tone is an expression of his self-effacing outward gaze, being most often conveyed in whimsical observations of the external world. In The Greeks in India (London: Faber, 1966), p. 51, he imparted this humorous evidence of Indo-Greek trade in the Seleucid era, just after Alexander's death:

> "Bindusara showed a knowledge of the characteristic products of Greece when he wrote to Antiochus I asking to be sent some wine, some raisins, and a sophist. Antiochus sent the wine and the raisins, but remarked dryly that 'in Greece it is not done to trade in philosophers.'"

Similarly, in To the City of the Dead: An Account of Travels in Mexico (London: Faber, 1957), p. 22, he appreciated the grim political graffiti directed against the ruling general:

> "Among the factories: Los Trabajadores con Ruiz Cortines - The Workers with Ruiz Cortines! And on the rural edge of the town: Los Campesinos con Ruiz Cortines - The Peasants with Ruiz Cortines!
>
> We were to see the same calls repeated everywhere we went in Mexico, until, on a cemetery wall in the South, a sardonic humorist made the ultimate appeal: Los Muertes con Ruiz Cortines - The Dead with Ruiz Cortines!"

96. George Woodcock, "Rum, Guns, and God," War Commentary, 6, No. 21 (August 11, 1945), p. 2.
See also: "British Imperialism Today," Freedom, 8, No. 2 (Jan. 18, 1947), p. 5; and "American Imperialism Today," Freedom, 8, No. 1 (Jan. 4,

1947), p. 5.

97. George Woodcock, "The Liberation of Burma," War Commentary, 6, No. 16 (June 2, 1945), p. 2.

98. George Woodcock, The British in the Far East: A Social History of the British Overseas (New York: Atheneum, 1969), pp. 24-25, 44, 48.

99. Woodcock, Far East, p. 40.

100. Woodcock, Far East, pp. 127, 163, 180, 204, 207, 217. The best overview of this many-faceted isolation was stated in Woodcock's introductory comments, p. xvii: "Either the climate, as in Malaya and Borneo, or the existing density of population, as in China and Japan, prevented any attempt to import people from Britain who would exploit the land with their own labour or serve as an immigrant working class. In consequence no homogeneous British society of the kind that grew up in the white dominions ever developed in the Far East. As in India, the British ruled there as a dominant race over countries and communities in which they remained a miniscule and socially isolated minority."

101. Woodcock, Far East, p. 226.

102. George Woodcock, "The Peroxide Saint," The Writer and Politics (London: Porcupine Press, 1948), pp. 240-248.

103. George Woodcock, Ravens and Prophets: An Account of Journeys in British Columbia, Alberta, and Southern Alaska (London: Alan Wingate, 1952), p. 58.

104. Woodcock, South Sea Journey, pp. 292-293.

105. George Woodcock, Incas and Other Men: Travels in the Andes (London: Faber, 1959), pp. 176-177.

106. George Woodcock, Who Killed the British Empire? An Inquest (Toronto: Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 1974), pp. 328, 332.

107. Woodcock, Empire, pp. 281, 327, 329, 330-331. To be fair, one must note that Woodcock set out not only to analyse the Empire's demise, but to trace its rise and fall. This he did in eloquent and clear if very general terms, recording the accretion of colonies and protectorates along the two shipping routes through the Medditteranean and around the Cape of Good Hope to the Indian Ocean and the eastern holdings. He marshalled the historical facts with

great clarity of purpose, defining 1930 as "The Year of No Return" for the Empire, delineating the myriad incidents that provoked a loss of faith in Empire both in England and in the colonies, and placing them within the contexts of the growth in western countries of a belief in national self-determination and of Britain's gradual withdrawal to her former position within the European economic nexus.

108. George Woodcock, The Greeks in India (London: Faber, 1966), pp. 72-73.

109. Woodcock, Greeks, pp. 28, 21.
One could record many examples of the diligent and balanced arguments contained in this study, but two must suffice. In the first Woodcock argued that the Greek Scyclax travelled to India in the sixth century B.C., noting that both Herodotus and Hecataeus said he passed through Caspapyros,"and since Hecataeus places Caspapyros in Gandhara, the Indian province nearest to the Hindu Kush, and calls it a frontier city, it seems evident that Scyclax crossed the Khyber Pass, and afterwards, as Olaf Caroe has suggested, embarked on the Kabul River in the easterly direction mentioned by Herodotus, turning south down the Indus at Attock" (p. 19).
Woodcock was also careful to discount tenuous ideas that supported his own theory, such as the notion that classical Sanskrit comedy was influenced by Athenian plays performed in Indo-Greek cities:

> "Yavana women often appear in Indian plays as the bodyguards of Kings, but their presence is derived from the actual practice of Indian courts, and it is no evidence of literary derivation. In default of other clues, a great deal has been made of the fact that the curtain in Greek drama is called yavanika - "the Greek cloth." No curtains, of course, were used in Greek drama proper" (p. 135).

110. In To The City of The Dead, p. 202, the fact that the Olmec tribe of La Venta possessed jewel jade, of which the only known deposits occur in Burma, was for Woodcock a proof of their general Mongol ancestry and a "fascinating hint" of a more direct lineage from the ancient Chinese. Similarly, in Kerala: A Portrait of the Malabar Coast (London: Faber, 1967), he noted that "The political history of Kerala begins in the hints of poets and legend-makers.... one must reconstruct the long period from the beginning of the Chera kingdom, at some undetermined time before the birth of Christ, to the ninth century" (p. 73), but he managed, nevertheless, to make plausible suppositions about the history of its peoples:

"...the mountain tribes and the fishermen and serf classes of the lowlands emerge as the original inhabitants, descendants of megalithic immigrants; the Nairs represent the true Dravidian element, pressed southward during the early part of the first millennium B.C. by the spread of Aryan domination north of the Vindya mountains; the Ezhavas appear as a seaborne people, probably from Ceylon, arriving with the richest gift Kerala has ever received, the coconut palm, at some time shortly before the beginning of the Christian era and not long after the time when the Nambudiri Brahmins wandered down from a Buddhist north where their Vedic conservatism was temporarily unwelcome" (p. 68).

111. Woodcock, South Sea Journey, pp. 191-192.

112. George Woodcock, Asia, Gods and Cities: Aden to Tokyo (London: Faber, 1966), p. 105.

113. Woodcock, Asia, p. 126.

114. George Woodcock, Faces of India: A Travel Narrative (London: Faber, 1964), p. 100.

115. Woodcock, Faces, p. 9.

116. Woodcock, Faces, p. 230.

117. Woodcock, Faces, p. 146.

118. Woodcock, Asia, pp. 16-17.
It must be admitted that this platitude was demonstrated by compelling detail:
"Past the newest buildings the camels came plodding in from the desert, with necklaces of blue beads round their curving necks and gilded bells jingling from their knees, and on the busiest corner of the city the tomb of a Moslem saint stands in the middle of a filling station, where the devotees prostrate themselves at the hour of prayer while the cars drive in and out and the tinkle of the cash register sounds an ironic obbligato."
While every corner of the vast panorama of Asian societies was filled with such detail, the theme of the irrepressible contradictions of Asia was tediously repetitive.

119. Woodcock, Asia, p. 44.

120. Woodcock, Asia, p. 126.

121. Woodcock, Asia, p. 295. Like most of Woodcock's travelogues, the book was full of symbolic scenes and incidents. His chapter on south-east Asia, where drought and poverty were soon to be alleviated, he hoped, by the Mekong River irrigation project, derived its title from the figure of an old and thin Cambodian woman laboriously peddling a treadmill to get a trickle of water onto the crop. This symbol of the elemental need of the area, and of the persistence and inadequacy of the old ways, retained a poetic intensity for Woodcock, for he recalled it fifteen years later in his poem, "Souvenir of Cambodia," The Mountain Road (Fredericton, N.B.: Fiddlehead, 1980), pp. 36-39.

122. George Woodcock, The Canadians (Toronto: Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 1979), p. 182.

123. Woodcock, The Canadians, p 182.

124. Woodcock, The Canadians, p. 193.

125. Woodcock, The Canadians, pp. 196-197, 215.

126. Woodcock, The Canadians, p. 110.

127. George Woodcock, "The Servants of Clio: Notes on Creighton and Groulx," Canadian Literature, No. 79 (Winter, 1979), p. 132.

128. Woodcock, "Servants of Clio," CL, p. 131.

129. Herbert Butterfield, The Whig Interpretation of History (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973), p. 71.

130. Letter received from George Woodcock, 11 March, 1981.

131. Woodcock, Kerala, p. 37.

132. Woodcock, Kerala, pp. 25, 35, 44, 46, 48. Woodcock noted several differences between Keralans and other Indians: the former were always less concerned with national issues such as the undeclared war with Pakistan; Malayali women were accorded more freedoms than their Indian counterparts; and the province had the highest levels of education and literacy in the country, which, combined with higher levels of unemployment and overpopulation, and a greater scarcity of locally grown foods, meant less political stability, so that in 1957 Kerala became the only Indian region ever to elect a Communist government.

133. Woodcock, Kerala, pp. 13-15.

134. Woodcock, Kerala, p. 36.

135. George Woodcock & Ivan Avakumovic, The Doukhobors (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1977), pp. 9-21, 22.

136. Woodcock & Avakumovic, Doukhobors: Peter Kalmykov, p. 69; Peter the Lordly,, p. 189; Peter the Purger, p. 301.

137. George Woodcock, Peoples of the Coast (Edmonton: Hurtig, 1977), p. 197.

138. Woodcock, Peoples, pp. 137, 149.

139. Woodcock, Peoples, p. 188.

140. George Woodcock, Canada and the Canadians (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1970), p. 141.

141. Woodcock, The Canadians, p. 300.

142. George Woodcock, Confederation Betrayed: The Case against Trudeau's Canada (Toronto: Harbour Publishing, 1981), p. 5.

143. Woodcock, Betrayed, p. 12.

144. George Woodcock, The Meeting of Time and Space: Regionalism in Canadian Literature (Edmonton: NeWest Press, 1980), p. 22.

145. Northrop Frye, The Modern Century (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 17.

146. Woodcock, Meeting, p. 10.

147. Woodcock, Betrayed, p. 13.

148. Woodcock, Asia, p. 105.

149. George Woodcock, "Various Americas," The New Romans: Candid Canadian Opinions of the United States, ed. Al Purdy (Edmonton: Hurtig, 1968), p. 76.

150. Woodcock, Ravens and Prophets, pp. 35, 84.

151. Woodcock, "Various Americas," New Romans, p. 81.

152. Woodcock, Canada and the Canadians, p. 307.

153. George Woodcock, "Victories and Farewells," Canadian

Literature, No. 65 (Summer, 1975), p. 4.

154. George Woodcock, "Up the Anti-Nation," The Rejection of Politics and other Essays on Canada, Canadians, Anarchism, and the World (Toronto: New Press, 1972), p. 76.

155. George Woodcock, "Various Americas."
The reference to the "uninformed xenophobe" occurred in the 1968 version of the article, published in New Romans, p. 75. In the 1972 version, which appeared in The Rejection of Politics, p. 90, the phrase "chronic mythologist" was introduced, and Mathews was identified as the accuser: "I am a Canadian, and a birthright one, in spite of that chronic mythologist, Robin Mathews, who, in a recent issue of Canadian Dimension, denounced me as a 'former Englishman.'"

156. Robin Mathews, "Charles G.D. Roberts and the Destruction of Canadian Imagination," Journal of Canadian Fiction, 1, No. 1 (Winter, 1972), pp. 75-89.

157. Robin Mathews, "The Wacousta Factor," Figures in a Ground: Canadian Essays on Modern Literature, ed. Diane Bessai and David Jackel (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1978), pp. 311-316.

158. Robin Mathews, "Developing a Language of Struggle: Canadian Literature and Literary Criticism," In Our Own House: Social Perspectives on Canadian Literature, ed. Paul Cappon (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1978), p. 139.

159. Mathews, "Language of Struggle," In Our Own House, p. 138.

160. Robin Mathews, "Literature, the Universities, and Liberal Ideology," Canadian Literature: Surrender or Revolution, ed. Gail Dexter (Toronto: Steel Rail Educational Publishing, 1978), p. 171.
Mathews understood clearly that culture could not be separated from politics and economics:

> "We are invited to travel under the perverse fiction that we can keep our identity, our own character, a Canadian culture, when we no longer own the wealth of the country or the power to use the wealth, as we see them, of the Canadian people. The fiction must be maintained by those who sell out and support U.S. takeover. They must pretend that the alienation of wealth does not alienate ideas, culture, knowledge, or power over national myth. But they are wrong" (pp. 167-168).

161. James Steele, "The Literary Criticism of Margaret Atwood," In our own House, p. 78.

162. Northrop Frye, "From Nationalism to Regionalism: The Maturing of Canadian Culture - Robert Fulford talks with Northrop Frye," Aurora: New Canadian Writing, ed. Morris Wolfe (Toronto: Doubleday, 1980), p. 8.

163. George Woodcock, "Various Americas," The New Romans, p. 80.

164. George Woodcock, "Up the Anti-Nation," Rejection of Politics, p. 78.

165. George Woodcock, "Not any Power: Reflections on Decentralism," Rejection of Politics, pp. 56-57.

166. Bruce Hodgins, "Nationalism, Decentralism, and the Left," Nationalism or Local Control: Responses to George Woodcock, ed. Viv Nelles & Abraham Rotstein (Toronto: New Press, 1973), pp. 43-44.

Patrick McFadden, "In the Dock of History," Local Control, p. 59.

167. Frank Cassidy, "The Anti-Politics of the Anti-Nation," Local Control, p. 84.

D.I. Davies, "The Epitome of a Colony," Local Control, p. 61.

168. Woodcock, Betrayed, pp. 84-85.

169. Woodcock, Betrayed, p.136.

170. Woodcock, Betrayed, pp. 142, 139, 131.

171. Woodcock, Betrayed, p. 121.

172. Woodcock, The Canadians, p. 297.

173. Carl Berger, The Writing of Canadian History: Aspects of English-Canadian Historical Writing: 1900-1970 (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1976), p. 220.

174. quoted in Berger, Writing of Canadian History, p. 220.

175. Berger, Writing of Canadian History, pp. 216-217.

176. George Woodcock, 100 Great Canadians (Edmonton: Hurtig, 1980), pp. 22, 52-53, 62-63.

177. Woodcock, 100 Great Canadians, pp. 93-95, 127-129, 135-137, 121-122

178. Woodcock, 100 Great Canadians, pp. 89-91, 95-97, 65-66.

179. George Grant, Technology and Empire: Perspectives on North America (Toronto: Anansi, 1969), p. 26.

180. Woodcock, Canada and the Canadians, pp. 82-89.

181. Woodcock, Canada and the Canadians, p. 61.

182. Woodcock, Betrayed, p. 18.

183. Woodcock, Dumont, pp. 18-19.

184. Woodcock & Avakumovic, Doukhobors, p. 11. Woodcock and Avakumovic told how Tolstoy, mistakenly believing the Doukhobors to be Christian anarchists like himself, co-operated with Kropotkin to publicize their plight and to arrange for their sanctuary in Canada. They arrived in 1902, and were almost immediately embroiled in strife with citizens and state; it seemed impossible to accommodate their wishes to hold land in blocks, to be exempt from military service, and to direct their children's education. Quaker missionaries tried to force Bible training upon them; in 1907 the government declared that land claims would be cancelled unless individuals cultivated and lived on their own land; and the harassments multiplied when the group moved from Manitoba to British Columbia in 1908. At the time of writing Doukhobor culture was nearly extinct.

185. Woodcock, The Canadians, p. 292.

CONCLUSION

George Woodcock's libertarian sensibility and the anarcho-Romantic unity of ideas pervading his eclectic works are best understood when placed within the context of Romantic idealism. Underlying his anarchist ideals is the Romantic assumption that man's innate nobility would be realized if he could but throw off the chains of social oppression. Central to the unsystematic collocation of Woodcock's central beliefs is the anarcho-Romantic principle that all social melioration depends upon the fullest possible development of the individual, and that individuals and their ideas are the motivating forces of history. His polemical emphasis on statement and persuasion in literature has been balanced, moreover, by a Romantic view of poetry as self-expression, with its corollary that the duty of the critic is to discover the emotions and intentions and attitudes - in short, the mind - of the creator behind the creation.

The rubric of Romantic idealism clarifies Woodcock's debt to Romanticism, and in so doing illuminates the dilemma of all modern authors who write within the penumbra of Romantic influences. Does literature make rational and discursive statements about life, thereby acting as an important guide for human behaviour, or is it a "pseudo-statement" that dramatizes but does not assert, a mute symbol or self-reflective image or autotelic pattern of myths? The former attitude represents the almost forgotten heritage of classicism, while the latter, the legacy of Romanticism, has influenced modern literature down to the latest manifestations of post-modernism, post-structuralism, and semiotics.[1] In his ambivalent position on the issue, Woodcock has epitomized the confusion of many modern authors. On one hand, he has written as though he were an eighteenth-century man of letters, amalgamating literary craft and imagination with polemical goals to form a well-rounded political art. On the other, he has compromised the view of literature as a means of rational communication about the external world by endorsing the Romantic conception of poetry as merely a performance, a dramatic presentation of the poet's emotions, unconscious impulses, and visitations from the gods.

Even more important in Woodcock's equivocal reaction to Romanticism was his ultimate conclusion that anarchism was not a practical plan for social change but rather an idealistic myth that might have salutary political effects.[2] Endemic to this belief in the anarchic myth, and indeed to any faith in myth, is the premise that mythic ideals have meaning only in the mind of the believer. This leaves open the crucial questions of how and whether the myth can be translated into reality. These questions are further baited by the argument, sometimes advanced in favour of anarchism, that it cannot be said to have failed since it has never been tried. Surely this amounts to an admission that the myth has always been and is likely to remain an untried ideal, parallel to Romantic poetry in its alienation from life. There is, in fact, good reason to believe that Woodcock adopted anarchism during the forties as a Romantic wish-fulfillment, an idealist's refuge from terrifying political upheaval. Anarchism accommodated the young man's deep sense of pessimism about political change while it offered a supremely optimistic assessment of human nature and its potential. In "Waterloo Bridge" (1941) he described his ideals as a sanctuary from the real world:

> But music in the spiritual ear
> Ignores the deadly world and thus, my love,
> Breathing, as gods, our mountain air of truth,
> We may escape the deadly hour of death.[3]

If the thirties, when English poetry was dominated by the Communism of Auden, Spender, Day Lewis, and MacNeice had been the decade of the public-school boy as left-wing intellectual, then the forties were, for Woodcock, Dylan Thomas, George Barker, and others, the era of the grammar-school boy as unacknowledged legislator. Without dissimulation, Woodcock claimed the visionary power of the seer; yet, as Gerald Graff has observed, this Romantic posture, entailing the view that the artist perceives life in terms other than those of ordinary objective judgement, leaves art open to the charge of social irrelevance and virtually relegates it to the status of an esoteric indulgence:

> The Shelleyan stereotype of the poet as the "unacknowledged legislator of the world," a godlike creator who brings forth a new cosmos _ex nihilo_ and soars beyond the range of commonsense reality, is, from another perspective, only an honorific reformulation of the alternate stereotype of the poet as a marginal person, a hapless trifler or eccentric who inhabits a world of autistic fantasy and turns his back on objective reality.... An inner connection links the doctrine of imaginative autonomy and the philosophical and social alienation of art.[4]

Not only in his poetry but also in many of his anarchist polemics of the forties, Woodcock made oracular proclamations which were jejune in their considerations of pragmatic realities.[5] When he came to Canada a growing scepticism led him to abandon the more naive principles of anarchism such as the natural sociability of man. These disclaimers were forgotten, however, when Woodcock chose to indulge his polemicist's facility for responding to the dramatic and rhetorical demands of the occasion. It seems that in ascending the mountain to imbibe his anarchist air of truth he has left behind pragmatism and logical consistency. Such hortatory excesses have conveyed the impression that awareness is all, that man has but to will and it will be done: the irresistible force of anarchist faith will crush all practical and theoretical impediments in its way: the nation-state, already decrepit, will crumble, and the anti-state will arise in its place. To a degree then, Woodcock has sought to dominate a hostile reality by the sheer force of personal conviction, and has been guilty of what Marxists have called "the bourgeois intellectual heresy":

> It is a human weakness to believe that by retiring into his imagination man can elicit categories or magical spells that will enable him to subjugate reality contemplatively. It is the error of the "theoretical" man, of the prophet, of the mystic, of the metaphysician, in its pathological form the error of the neurotic. It is the trace of the primitive believer in magic that remains in us all.[6]

This statement by Christopher Caudwell illuminates the tendency toward solipsism in Woodcock's romantic idealism. Yet Caudwell's attitude should not lead us to err in the opposite direction; it would be unconscionably naive to assume that modern man should or even could jettison his forbears' needs for faith and absolute moral values. The implementation of Marxist ideals in Russian Communism has proven, as Arthur Koestler showed in his novel Darkness at Noon (1947), that reason and a relativistic or politically determined morality will not suffice as guides for human behaviour. Koestler's hero believed in the Communist Party maxims that "Honour is to be useful without fuss" and "We have replaced decency by reason" until just before his execution in the Stalinist purges, when he admitted that mankind could not sail without moral and spiritual ballast.[7] Countless authors have lamented modern man's alienation from the emotional, physical, and spiritual aspects of his being. In a world of political oppression, W.H. Auden noted in "1st September, 1939," it is imperative that Justice be affirmed as a metaphysical value:

> Defenceless under the night
> Our world in stupour lies;
> Yet, dotted everywhere,
> Ironic points of light
> Flash out wherever the Just
> Exchange their messages[8]

Our Romantic idealists must be heard, for they address our need to integrate reason and pragmatism with passion, faith, and idealism. Exchangers of messages like Woodcock were needed in the thirties and forties when the world lay beneath the shadow of totalitariansim, and they are needed today because that shadow has not lifted. Citizens of dictatorial régimes must feel the same urgency Woodcock felt in 1941 when he wrote forebodingly that "Every year, every month, every hour, the states become more total, more efficient in their macabre role of destruction, more completely equipped in the instruments of social hari-kari."[9] As we confront daily the danger of total annihilation of earthly life through nuclear arms, we need dogged social critics like Woodcock to ask whether men will "learn in time the saving harmonies,"[10] and to urge us to positive action. He and others like him also perform the valuable service of keeping before our eyes the more insidious but equally deadly threat that ethical values will be eroded through propaganda, veiled intimidation of individuals by the state, and, to use Orwell's image of the modern world, by many boots flattening many human faces. If the words freedom, honour, truth, and justice are to have any actuality in any country at any time, there must be idealists who will insist tenaciously that these values do indeed exist, and who will question their true meanings.

This is not to suggest that Woodcock's faults should be overlooked. Previous writers have contributed little to a sound understanding of his achievement by composing dithyrambs of adulation. It must be admitted that his sedulous iteration of the same beatific vision and the same social criticisms has tainted his fierce intelligence, impassioned moral integrity, and whimsical irony with a dull predictability. Journalistic impressionism and the simplifying themes of the popularizer have been blended incongruously with genuine erudition. Woodcock has voiced the autodidact's ill-founded biases that academic critics are narrow textual analysts and that academic historians are dry-as-dust assemblers of facts. As a man of letters writing outside the universities he has faced severe financial pressures, resulting in stylistic lapses, the recycling of themes and research materials, and the writing of several potboilers which has sapped energy from his more serious work.

Woodcock transcends these weaknesses, however, for he remains a writer of graceful and controlled prose, and a social thinker who cannot simply be dismissed as a dreamer any more than he can be made into an avatar or an incubus of chaos and doom. He is to be remembered, rather, as the humane exponent of a number of social ideals: the maintenance of the most direct link possible between individual needs and government policies; the primacy of individual spiritual insight over repressive Church doctrine; the value of communal profit-sharing organizations in all kinds of work; an integrated education that would develop the human faculties equally; and the designing of tasks so that each worker can feel a creative interest in his work. Anarchism is the opposite of a nihilistic assertion of will; Woodcock has pointed out that mutual aid and self-government would require greater personal sacrifices for the sake of the group. Nor is anarchism to be equated with the liberalist emancipation of greed. Anarchists have eschewed the liberalist mastery of nature through technology and of the self through reason: as Woodcock stated, "Most politicians live by reason and cunning and seek power; most anarchists live by faith or passion and seek the kingdom of God on earth."[11]

One must attain a judicious sense of balance, therefore, in evaluating Woodcock's political art. If many of his over forty testaments of political faith have come to decorate the coffee-tables and bookshelves of the middle class, this is a necessary irony, for he has not sought to preach to the converted; he has chronicled the lives of those George Grant called "the losers of history" so that the winners might be jolted from their self-interest and xenophobia. His writings present an ironic awareness of the myriad contradictions besetting any political commitment, and also the poignant spectacle of a faith burdened but eventually strengthened by doubts. Woodcock's life has exhibited anarchist ideals in many ways, including his attempt at a Tolstoyan life of rural simplicity upon arrival in Canada, and his Aid Society for Tibetan refugees. He has shown a libertarian sensibility in his openness toward other cultures, his uncompromising honesty and self-scrutiny, his idiosyncratic range of interests, and his deference and generosity toward colleagues and acquaintances. Julian Symons contributed the best peroration on his friend's life and work when he commented that "If we were all like George Woodcock, the principle of mutual aid amongst human beings might be something more than a romantic illusion."[12]

NOTES

1. Gerald Graff, *Literature against Itself: Literary Ideas in Modern Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), pp. 60-62.

2. In "The Functions of the Political Myth," *The Writer and Politics* (London: Porcupine Press, 1948), pp. 28-42, Woodcock accepted George Sorel's view of myth as a political weapon, as set forth in his *Reflections on Violence*. He argued that all political myths, including the Marxist myth of the downfall of the capitalist order and the withering away of the state, do not define real and achievable goals, but instead act either as pernicious falsehoods impeding social advancement (p. 40) or as ideals that may inspire men to moral and responsible action (p. 28). In later years Woodcock recognized that the free society of the anarchists had little chance of being realized, though he continued to advocate the anarchist myth. His final position was exactly that of his intellectual mentor, Herbert Read, as quoted in Woodcock's *Herbert Read: The Stream and the Source* (London: Faber, 1972), p. 242:
   > "My understanding of the history of culture has convinced me that the ideal society is a point on the receding horizon. Nevertheless we must engage with passion in the immediate strife - such is the nature of things, and if defeat is inevitable (as it is) we are not excused."

3. George Woodcock, "Waterloo Bridge," *Notes on Visitations: Poems, 1936-1975* (Toronto: Anansi, 1975), p. 11; first pub. *Now* (Summer, 1941), pp. 11-15.

4. Gerald Graff, *Literature against Itself*, p. 36.

5. Though he admitted in his pamphlet, *Homes or Hovels?* (London: Freedom Press, 1944), p. 31, that the form of housing that would be adopted in the free society could not be predicted, he went on to imply, through the clever rhetorical use of the verb "will," that

his idyllic prophecy was soon to be realized (pp. 31-32):

> "In general, the new society will probably see a strong tendency for the country to become more thickly populated, and for the town to become more ruralised. Even in the old cities, this is likely to take place as their populations shrink and old, useless buildings are pulled down and replaced by parks and gardens.
>
> Dwellings will be built for health and pleasure. They will be so oriented and spaced as to receive the maximum of sunlight. They will be constructed so as to admit plenty of fresh air and to make cleaning as simple as possible. They will make great provision for privacy - a need at present rarely catered for in working class families - and the elimination of external sound will be carefully achieved. They will be built away from through traffic roads, to avoid both the noise of such thoroughfares and their danger to children.
>
> For the first time the social value of aesthetics in housing is likely to be fully realised."

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Bibliographical Note

The divisions of the following Bibliography follow the Chapter titles quite closely, though the Bibliographical headings are less metaphorical, and more indicative of the specific materials listed thereunder. Since these headings incorporate both chronological and thematic distinctions, there are some overlappings in three out of four cases. "Early Years, 1938-1949" lists some articles of the early fifties, and several later articles, interviews, and radio talks reminiscent of this early period of Woodcock's life. "Anarchist Writings, 1949-1962" contains some entries dated later than 1962 which document further the change which occurred in Woodcock's version of anarchism during those years. "Romantic Criticicm" includes material pertaining to Woodcock's critical writings spanning from 1950 to the present, while "Later Polemical Writings, 1962 to the Present" encompasses some writings related to Woodcock's biographies and to his view of Canadian culture published before 1962. Each of the four divisions consists of Primary and Secondary sources; the latter are, of course, relevant only in a thematic sense.

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